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EIGHTEEN
S E R M O N S
ON
VARIOUS SUBJECTS,
SELECTED FROM THE WORKS
OF THE REV.
ISAAC BARROW, D.D.
FORMERLY MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.



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MEMOIR
OF
ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

ISAAC BARROW, the learned and pious author of the following Sermons, born in the month of October, 1630, was the son of Thomas Barrow, a respected citizen of London, and the nephew and namesake of Isaac Barrow, then Lord Bishop of St. Asaph. He was at an early age sent to the Charterhouse School, where he made so small proficiency, that he was removed to Felsted, in Essex. His contemporary biographer indeed says, "that so little appearance was there of that comfort which his father afterwards received from him, that he often solemnly expressed his wish, if it should please God to take away any of his children, it might be his son Isaac. So vain a thing is man's judgment, and so inadequate is our own knowledge to guide our own affairs."

It is, indeed, not only an act of presumption and ignorance, when men would select for themselves the course of events under which they would desire to live, but it is also a source of incessant disappointments, and great uneasiness and discontent. If we would heartily resign our circumstances and ourselves to the direction of Providence, making the best of what he is pleased to dispense, and cherishing that heavenly temper of mind, which under all the changes and chances of this mortal life suggests the pious feeling, "This pleases me, because it pleases my heavenly Father," we should possess within us a never-failing source of satisfaction and solace. Very few years elapsed before Thomas Barrow had reason to thank God for having blessed him with a son who proved in after life to be not only kind and affectionate and dutiful to his father, but one of the brightest ornaments of his Church and country.

Isaac Barrow having by redoubled diligence redeemed his lost time, and made great progress in the elementary branches of education, was entered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1645. Here he had to contend with some pecuniary difficulties. His father's steady adherence to the Royal cause had so reduced his means, that so far from being able

to support his son at the University, he stood himself in need of assistance. However, it pleased God to raise him up friends who supplied his wants, and enabled him to pursue his studies without interruption. Among these benefactors was the celebrated Dr. Hammond, who had the satisfaction, in return for his kindness and bounty, to witness his young friend devoting himself to the cultivation of sound learning and genuine piety, those "best preparatives for the succeeding varieties of life."

Isaac Barrow, like his father and his uncle, was a warm supporter of royalty, a circumstance which originally put an almost insuperable barrier against his election as fellow, and which, after his merits had prevailed upon the electors to overlook his political predilections, often brought the possession of his fellowship into jeopardy. The Master of his College, on one occasion, being strongly urged to deprive him of his fellowship, replied, "Let Barrow alone, he is a more valuable man than any of us."

But England was at that time so torn asunder by internal wars and tumults, and the confusion and animosities prevailing every where proved so unhappy an impediment to the studies in which Barrow delighted, that he sold his books, and went abroad. At Paris he found his father in much poverty, but in faithful attendance on his king. Having shared with him the little sum which he had been able to collect, he proceeded in his travels. At Constantinople, the see of that great Father of the Church, Chrysostom, he read all the works of that eloquent and faithful Minister of God's word.

By the statutes of the College the fellows were bound to take orders within a prescribed period; but many persons considered the confusion of those times a sufficient justification of their postponement of that duty. Barrow, however, who had both an enlightened and a tender conscience, felt himself, after his return to England, under an obligation to comply, as nearly as possible, with the wishes of the founders; and, therefore, sought and obtained holy orders at the hands of one of the ejected bishops.

He had so successfully devoted himself to mathematical studies, and established so high a character for superior knowledge in that department, that he was successively advanced to the Professorship of Geometry in Gresham College, which he filled for a very short time, and to the Mathematical Chair in Cambridge. The latter he resigned to his good friend the great Sir Isaac Newton. His preferment was very small, till he was advanced, in 1672, to the Mastership of his College, an office the duties of which he discharged in the most exemplary manner. On this appointment, the king, who was his patron, said, "I have given the office to the best scholar in my kingdom." Perhaps he devoted too much

time to his studies at this period of his life, robbing himself of many hours' sleep every morning, that he might add to his stock of sermons without entrenching upon the time necessary for the active and public duties of his station. His constitution was thus probably injured, and rendered less able to contend with a severe attack of fever, which seized him in the spring of 1677, and carried him off in the very midst of his career of self-improvement, and public usefulness. He died in one of the houses adjoining the Cloisters of Westminster Abbey, and he was buried in that church. His epitaph, which ascribes to him a character eminently distinguished by the highest intellectual, moral, and spiritual excellences, seems to have been no less a representation of the truth, than the grateful testimony of devoted friendship.

Those who knew him assure us that he was an example of contentment in all conditions of life, of candour in his judgment of others in all doubtful cases, of moderation among differing and contending parties, of knowledge unaccompanied by ostentation, of great charity to the utmost of his means, and sincere and cheerful piety towards God. His Sermons, and his other works, contain the best internal evidence of their author being a scholar, a philosopher, a divine, and a practical Christian.

Archbishop Tillotson's testimony to the merits of Isaac Barrow's Discourses, is conveyed in these striking expressions. "As they want no other kind of excellency, so they are animated throughout with so genuine a spirit of true piety and goodness, that he must be either a perfectly good or a prodigiously bad man, that can read them over without being the better for them."

The following selection of Sermons, now published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, are recommended to the careful perusal of all to whom Christian knowledge and truth are dear.

*Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,
April, 1849.*

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SERMON I.

THE PLEASANTNESS OF RELIGION.

PROV. iii. 17.

“ Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

THE meaning of these words seems plain and obvious, and to need little explication. *Her ways*, that is, the ways of Wisdom. What this Wisdom is, I shall not undertake accurately to describe. Briefly, I understand by it, an habitual skill or faculty of judging aright about matters of practice, and choosing according to that right judgment, and conforming the actions to such good choice. *Ways* and *paths* in Scripture dialect are the courses and manners of action. For *doing* there is commonly called *walking*; and the methods of doing are the *ways* in which we walk. By *pleasantness* may be meant the joy and delight accompanying, and by *peace* the content and satisfaction ensuing such a course of actions. So that, in short, the sense of these words seems simply to be this; that a course of life directed by wisdom and good judgment is delightful in the practice, and brings content after it. The truth of which proposition it shall be my endeavour at this time to confirm by divers reasons, and illustrate by several instances.

I. Then, Wisdom of itself is delectable and satisfactory, as it implies a revelation of truth, and a detec-

tion of error to us. It is like light¹, pleasant to behold, casting a sprightly lustre, and diffusing a benign influence all about; presenting a goodly prospect of things to the eyes of our mind; displaying objects in their due shapes, postures, magnitudes, and colours; quickening our spirits with a comfortable warmth, and disposing our minds to a cheerful activity; dispelling the darkness of ignorance, scattering the mists of doubt, driving away the spectres of delusive fancy; mitigating the cold of sullen melancholy; discovering obstacles, securing progress, and making the passages of life clear, open, and pleasant. We are all naturally endowed with a strong appetite to know, to see, to pursue truth; and with a bashful abhorrency from being deceived and entangled in mistake. And as success in inquiry after truth affords matter of joy and triumph; so being conscious of error and miscarriage therein, is attended with shame and sorrow. These desires Wisdom in the most perfect manner satisfies, not by entertaining us with dry, empty, fruitless theories, upon mean and vulgar subjects; but by enriching our minds with excellent and useful knowledge, directed to the noblest objects, and serviceable to the highest ends. Nor in its own nature only, but,

II. Much more in its worthy consequences is Wisdom exceedingly pleasant and peaceable: in general, by disposing us to acquire and to enjoy all the good, delight, and happiness we are capable of; and by freeing us from all the inconveniences, mischiefs, and infelicities our condition is subject to. For whatever good from clear understanding, deliberate advice, sagacious foresight, stable resolution, dexterous address, right intention, and orderly proceeding, doth naturally result, Wisdom confers: whatever evil blind ignorance, false presumption, unwary credulity, precipitate rashness, unsteady purpose, ill contrivance, backwardness, inability, unwieldiness and confusion of thought, beget, Wisdom prevents. From a thousand snares and treach-

¹ Veritatis luce menti hominis nihil dulcius.—*Cic. Acad.* 2.

erous allurements, from innumerable rocks and dangerous surprises, from exceedingly many needless incumbrances and vexatious toils of fruitless endeavour, she redeems and secures us. More particularly,

III. Wisdom assures us we take the best course, and proceed as we ought. For by the same means we judge aright, and reflecting upon that judgment are assured we do so: as the same arguments by which we demonstrate a theorem convince us we have demonstrated it, and the same light by which we see an object makes us know we see it. And this assurance in the progress of the action exceedingly pleases, and in the sequel of it infinitely contents us. He that judges amiss, not perceiving clearly the rectitude of his process, proceeds usually with a dubious solicitude; and at length, discovering his error, condemns his own choice, and receives no other satisfaction but of repentance. Like a traveller, who, being uncertain whether he goes in the right way, wanders in continual perplexity, till he be informed, and then too late, understanding his mistake, with regret seeks to recover himself into it. But he that knows his way, and is satisfied that it is the true one, makes on merrily and carelessly, not doubting he shall in good time arrive to his designed journey's end. Two troublesome mischiefs therefore Wisdom frees us from, the company of anxious doubt in our actions, and the consequence of bitter repentance: for no man can doubt of what he is sure, nor repent of what he knows good.

IV. Wisdom begets in us a hope of success in our actions, and is usually attended therewith. Now, what is more delicious than hope? what more satisfactory than success? *That* is like the pursuit of a flying enemy, *this* like gathering the spoil; *that* like viewing the ripe corn, *this* like the joy of harvest itself. And he that aims at a good end, and knows he uses proper means to attain it, why should he despair of success, since effects naturally follow their causes, and the Divine Providence is wont to afford its concurrence to such proceedings? Besides that such well-grounded hope con-

firms resolution, and quickens activity, which mainly conduce to the prosperous issue of designs. Farther,

V. Wisdom prevents discouragement from the possibility of ill success, yea, and makes disappointment itself tolerable. For if either the foresight of a possible miscarriage should discourage us from adventuring on action, or inculpable frustration were intolerable, we should with no heart apply ourselves to any thing; there being no designs in this world, though founded upon the most sound advice, and prosecuted by the most diligent endeavour, which may not be defeated, as depending upon divers causes above our power, and circumstances beyond our prospect. The inconstant opinions, uncertain resolutions, mutable affections, and fallacious pretences of men, upon which the accomplishment of most projects rely, may easily deceive and disappoint us. The imperceptible course of nature exerting itself in sudden tempests, diseases, and unlucky casualties, may surprise us, and give an end to our businesses and lives together. However, the irresistible power of the Divine Providence, guided by the unsearchable counsel of his will, we can never be assured that it will not interpose, and hinder the effects of our endeavours. Yet, notwithstanding, when we act prudently, we have no reason to be disheartened; because, having good intentions, and using fit means, and having done our best, as no deserved blame, so no considerable damage can arrive to us: and though we find Almighty God hath crossed us, yet we are sure he is not displeased with us. Which consideration, wherewith Wisdom furnishes us, will make the worst success not only tolerable, but comfortable to us. For hence we have reason to hope, that the All-wise Goodness reserves a better reward for us, and will sometime recompense not only the good purposes we unhappily pursued, but also the unexpected disappointment we patiently endured;—and that however we shall be no losers in the end. Which discourse is mainly fortified by considering how the best and wisest attempts have often miscarried. We see Moses,

authorized by God's command, directed by his counsel, and conducted by his hand, intended to bring the Israelites into the land of Canaan; yet by the unreasonable incredulity and stubborn perverseness of that people he had his purpose frustrated. The holy prophets afterward earnestly endeavoured to contain the same people within compass of obedience to the Divine commands, and to reduce them from their idolatrous and wicked courses; yet without correspondent effect. Our Saviour, by the example of his holy life, continual instruction, and vehement exhortations, assayed to procure a belief of and submission to his most excellent doctrine; yet how few *believed his report*, and complied with his discipline! Yea, Almighty God himself often complains, how in a manner his designs were defeated, his desires thwarted, his offers refused, his counsels rejected, his expectations deceived. *Wherefore* (saith he concerning his vineyard), *when I looked it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?*² And again, *I have spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people*³. And again, *I have even sent unto you all my prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them: yet they hearkened not unto me*⁴. Wherefore there is no good cause we should be disheartened, or vexed, when success is wanting to well-advised purposes. It is foolish and ill-grounded intentions, and practices unwarrantable by good reason, that make the undertakers solicitous of success, and being defeated leave them disconsolate. Yea farther,

VI. Wisdom makes all the troubles, griefs, and pains incident to life, whether casual adversities, or natural afflictions, easy and supportable; by rightly valuing the importance, and moderating the influence of them. It suffers not busy fancy to alter the nature, amplify the degree, or extend the duration of them, by representing them more sad, heavy, and remediless than they truly are. It allows them no force beyond what naturally and necessarily they have, nor contributes

² Isa. v. 4.

³ Isa. lxxv. 2.

⁴ Jer. vii. 25, 26.

nourishment to their increase. It keeps them at a due distance, not permitting them to encroach upon the soul, or to propagate their influence beyond their proper sphere. It will not let external mischances, as poverty and disgrace, to produce an inward sense which is beyond their natural efficacy: nor corporeal affections of sickness and pain to disturb the mind, with which they have nothing to do. The region of these malignant distempers being at most but the habit of the body, Wisdom by effectual antidotes repels them from the heart, and inward parts of the soul. If any thing, sin, and our unworthy miscarriages toward God, should vex and discompose us: yet this trouble, Wisdom, by representing the Divine goodness, and his tender mercies in our ever-blessed Redeemer, doth perfectly allay. And as for all other adversities, it abates their noxious power, by showing us they are either merely imaginary, or very short and temporary: that they admit of remedy, or at most do not exclude comfort, not wholly hindering the operations of the mind, nor extinguishing its joys; that they may have a profitable use, and pleasant end; and, however, neither imply bad conscience, nor induce obligation to punishment. For,

VII. Wisdom hath always a good conscience attending it, that purest delight, and richest cordial of the soul; that brazen wall, and impregnable fortress against both external assaults, and internal commotions; that *continual feast*, whereon the mind, destitute of all other repast, with a never languishing appetite, may entertain itself; that faithful witness, and impartial judge, whoever accuses, always acquitting the innocent soul; that certain friend, in no strait failing, in no adversity deserting; that sure refuge in all storms of fortune, and persecutions of disgrace; which, as Solomon here notes, renders a man's *sleep sweet*, and undisturbed with fearful phantasms, his heart light, and his steps secure; and, if any thing can make the Stoical paradox good, and cause the wise man to smile in extremity of torment; arming his mind with an invincible courage, and infusing a due confidence into it, whereby he bears up

cheerfully against malicious reproach, undauntedly sustains adversity, and triumphs over bad fortune. And this invaluable treasure the wise man is only capable of possessing; who certainly knows, and heartily approves the grounds upon which he proceeds; whereas the fool, building his choice upon blind chance, or violent passion, or giddy fancy, or uncertain example, not upon the steady warrant of good reason, cannot avoid being perplexed with suspicion of mistake, and so necessarily is deprived of the comfort of a good conscience.

VIII. Wisdom confers a facility, expert readiness, and dexterity in action; which is a very pleasant and commodious quality, and exceedingly sweetens activity. To do things with difficulty, struggling, and immoderate contention, disheartens a man, quells his courage, blunts the edge of his resolution, renders him sluggish and averse from business, though apprehended never so necessary, and of great moment. These obstructions Wisdom removes, facilitating operations by directing the intention to ends possible and attainable, by suggesting fit means and instruments to work by, by contriving right methods and courses of process; the mind by it being stored with variety of good principles, sure rules, and happy expedients, reposed in the memory, and ready upon all occasions to be produced, and employed in practice.

IX. Wisdom begets a sound, healthful, and harmonious complexion of the soul, disposing us with judgment to distinguish, and with pleasure to relish savoury and wholesome things, but to nauseate and reject such as are ingrateful and noxious to us; thereby capacifying us to enjoy pleasantly and innocently all those good things the Divine Goodness hath provided for and consigned to us: whence to the soul proceeds all that comfort, joy, and vigour, which results to the body from a good constitution and perfect health.

X. Wisdom acquaints us with ourselves, our own temper and constitution, our propensions and passions, our habitudes and capacities; a thing not only of

mighty advantage, but of infinite pleasure and content to us. No man in the world less knows a fool than himself; nay, he is more than ignorant, for he constantly errs in the point, taking himself for, and demeaning himself as toward another, a better, a wiser, and abler man than he is. He hath wonderful conceits of his own qualities and faculties; he affects commendations incompetent to him; he soars at employment surpassing his ability to manage. No comedy can represent a mistake more odd and ridiculous than his: for he wanders, and stares, and hunts after, but never can find nor discern himself; but always encounters with a false shadow instead thereof, which he passionately hugs and admires. But a wise man, by constant observation, and impartial reflection upon himself, grows very familiar with himself: he perceives his own inclinations, which, if bad, he strives to alter and correct; if good, he cherishes and corroborates them: he apprehends the matters he is fitting for, and capable to manage, neither too mean and unworthy of him, nor too high and difficult for him; and those applying his care to, he transacts easily, cheerfully, and successfully. So being neither puffed up with vain and overweening opinion, nor dejected with heartless diffidence of himself; neither admiring, nor despising; neither irksomely hating, nor fondly loving himself; he continues in good humour, maintains a sure friendship and fair correspondence with himself, and rejoices in the retirement and private conversation with his own thoughts: whence flows a pleasure and satisfaction unexpressible.

XI. Wisdom procures and preserves a constant favour and fair respect of men, purchases a good name, and upholds reputation in the world: which things are naturally desirable, commodious for life, encouragements to good, and preventive of many inconveniences. The composed frame of mind, uniform and comely demeanour, compliant and inoffensive conversation, fair and punctual dealing, considerate motions, and dexterous addresses of wise men, naturally beget esteem and affection in those that observe them.

Neither than these things is there any thing more commendable to human regard. As symmetry and harmony to the animal senses, so delectable is an even temper of soul and orderly tenor of actions to rational apprehensions. Folly is freakish and humorous, impertinent and obstreperous, inconstant and inconsistent, peevish and exceptionous; and consequently fastidious to society, and productive of aversation and disrespect. But the wise man is stable in his ways, consonant to himself, suiting his actions to his words, and those to his principles, and all to the rule of right reason; so that you may know where to find him, and how to deal with him, and may easily please him; which makes his acquaintance acceptable, and his person valuable: beside that real worth of itself commands respect, and extorts veneration from men, and usually prosperity waits upon his well-advised attempts, which exceedingly adorn and advance the credit of the undertaker: however, if he fails sometime, his usual deportment salves his repute, and easily makes it credible it was no fault of his, but of his fortune. If a fool prosper, the honour is attributed to propitious chance; if he miscarry, to his own ill management: but the entire glory of happy undertakings crowns the head of Wisdom; while the disgrace of unlucky events falls elsewhere. His light, like that of the sun, cannot totally be eclipsed; it may be dimmed, but never extinguished, and always maintains a day, though overclouded with misfortune. Who less esteems the famous African captain for being overthrown in that last fatal battle, wherein he is said to have shown the best skill, and yet endured the worst of success? Who contemns Cato, and other the grave citizens of Rome, for embracing the just, but prosperous cause of the commonwealth? A wise man's circumstances may vary and fluctuate like the floods about a rock; but he persists unmoveably the same, and his reputation unshaken: for he can always render a good account of his actions, and by reasonable apology elude the assaults of reproach.

XII. Wisdom instructs us to examine, compare, and

rightly to value the objects that court our affections, and challenge our care; and thereby regulates our passions, and moderates our endeavours: which begets a pleasant serenity and peaceable tranquillity of mind. For when, being deluded with false shows, and relying upon ill-grounded presumptions, we highly esteem, passionately affect, and eagerly pursue things of little worth in themselves, or concernment to us, as we unhandsomely prostitute our affections, and prodigally mis-spend our time, and vainly lose our labour; so the event not answering our expectation, our minds thereby are confounded, disturbed, and distempered. But when, guided by right reason, we conceive great esteem of, and zealously are enamoured with, and vigorously strive to attain things of excellent worth, and weighty consequence; the conscience of having well placed our affections, and well employed our pains, and the experience of fruits corresponding to our hopes, ravishes our mind with unexpressible content. And so it is: present appearance and vulgar conceit ordinarily impose upon our fancies, disguising things with a deceitful varnish, and representing those that are vainest with the greatest advantage; whilst the noblest objects, being of a more subtile and spiritual nature, like fairest jewels enclosed in a homely box, avoid the notice of gross sense, and pass undiscerned by us. But the light of Wisdom, as it unmaskes specious imposture, and bereaves it of its false colours; so it penetrates into the retirements of true excellency, and reveals its genuine lustre. For example, corporeal pleasure, which so powerfully allures and enchants us, Wisdom declares that it is but a present, momentary, and transient satisfaction of brutish sense, dimming the light, sullyng the beauty, impairing the vigour, and restraining the activity of the mind; diverting from better operations, and indisposing it to enjoy purer delights; leaving no comfortable relish or gladsome memory behind it, but often followed with bitterness, regret, and disgrace: That the profit the world so greedily gapes after is but a possession of trifles, not

valuable in themselves, nor rendering the masters of them so ; accidentally obtained, and promiscuously enjoyed by all sorts, but commonly by the worst of men ; difficultly acquired, and easily lost ; however, to be used but for a very short time, and then to be resigned into uncertain hands : That the honour men so dote upon is ordinarily but the difference of a few petty circumstances, a peculiar name or title, a determinate place, a distinguishing ensign ; things of only imaginary excellence, derived from chance, and conferring no advantage, except from some little influence they have upon the arbitrary opinion and fickle humour of the people ; complacency in which is vain, and reliance upon it dangerous : That power and dominion, which men so impatiently struggle for, are but necessary evils introduced to restrain the bad tempers of men ; most evil to them that enjoy them ; requiring tedious attendance, distracting care, and vexatious toil ; attended with frequent disappointment, opprobrious censure, and dangerous envy ; having such real burdens, and slavish incumbrances, sweetened only by superficial pomps, strained obsequiousness, some petty privileges and exemptions scarce worth the mentioning : That wit and parts, of which men make such ostentation, are but natural endowments, commendable only in order to use, apt to engender pride and vanity, and hugely dangerous if abused or misemployed. What should I mention beauty, that fading toy ; or bodily strength and activity, qualities so palpably inconsiderable ? Upon these, and such like flattering objects, so adored by vulgar opinion, Wisdom exercising severe and impartial judgment, and perceiving in them no intrinsic excellence, no solid content springing from them, no perfection thence accruing to the mind, no high reward allotted to them, no security to the future condition, or other durable advantages proceeding from them ; it concludes they deserve not any high opinion of the mind, nor any vehement passion of the soul, nor any laborious care to be employed on them, and moderates our affections toward

them : it frees us from anxious desire of them ; from being transported with excessive joy in the acquisition of them ; from being overwhelmed with disconsolate sorrow at the missing of them, or parting with them ; from repining and envying at those who have better success than ourselves in the procuring them ; from immoderate toil in getting, and care in preserving them : and so delivering us from all these unquiet anxieties of thought, tumultuous perturbations of passion, and tedious vexations of body, it maintains our minds in a cheerful calm, quiet indifferency, and comfortable liberty. On the other side, things of real worth and high concernment, that produce great satisfaction to the mind, and are mainly conducive to our happiness, such as are a right understanding and strong sense of our obligations to Almighty God, and relations to men, a sound temper and complexion of mind, a virtuous disposition, a capacity to discharge the duties of our places, a due qualification to enjoy the happiness of the other world ; these and such like things, by discovering their nature, and the effects resulting from them, it engages us highly to esteem, ardently to affect, and industriously to pursue ; so preventing the inconveniences that follow the want of them, and conveying the benefits arising from the possession of them.

XIII. Wisdom distinguishes the circumstances, limits the measures, determines the modes, appoints the fit seasons, of action ; so preserving decorum and order, the parent of peace, and preventing confusion, the mother of iniquity, strife, and disquiet. It is in the business of human life as in a building : a due proportion of bigness, a fit situation of place, a correspondency of shape, and suitableness of colour, is to be observed between the parts thereof, a defect in any of which requisites, though the materials hap to be choice and excellent, makes the whole fabric deformed and ugly to judicious apprehension. The best actions, if they swell, and exceed their due measure, if they be unskilfully misplaced, if in uncouth manner performed, they lose their quality, and turn both to the disgrace

and disadvantage of life. It is commendable to pray; but they that would always be performing that duty, by their absurd devotion procured to themselves the title of heretics: and they that will stand praying in places of public concourse, deserved our Saviour's reprehensions; and those men who, against the custom and ordinary use, would needs pray with their faces covered, you know that St. Paul insinuates of them, that they were fond and contentious persons. Friendly admonition is very laudable, and of rare use; but being upon all occasions immoderately used, or in public society so as to encroach upon modesty, or endamage reputation; or when the person admonished is otherwise employed, and attent upon his business; or being delivered in an imperiously insulting way, or in harsh and opprobrious language; it becomes unsavoury and odious, and both in show and effect resembles a froward, malicious exceptionousness. It were infinite to compute in how many instances want of due order, measure, and manner, do spoil and incommode action. It is Wisdom that applies remedy to these mischiefs. Things must be compared to, and arbitrated by, her standard, or else they will contain something of monstrous enormity; either strutting in unwieldy bulk, or sinking in defective scantness. If she do not fashion and model circumstances, they will sit ugly on the things that wear them; if she do not temper the colours, and describe the lineaments, the draught of practice will be but rude and imperfect, and little resemble the true patterns of duty: but if she interpose, and perform her part, all things will appear conformable, neat, and delicate.

XIV. Wisdom discovers our relations, duties, and concernments, in respect of men, with the natural grounds of them; thereby both qualifying and inclining us to the discharge of them: whence exceeding convenience, pleasure, and content ensues. By it we understand we are parts and members of the great body, the universe; and are therefore concerned in the good management of it, and are thereby obliged to

procure its order and peace, and by no irregular undertaking to disturb or discompose it; which makes us honest and peaceable men: that we proceed from the same primitive stock, are children of the same father, and partake of the same blood with all men; are endowed with like faculties of mind, passions of soul, shape of body, and sense of things: that we have equally implanted in our original constitution inclinations to love, pity, gratitude, sociableness, quiet, joy, reputation: that we have an indispensable need and impatient desire of company, assistance, comfort, and relief; that therefore it is according to the design of nature, and agreeable to reason, that to those to whom our natural condition by so many bands of cognation, similitude, and mutual necessitude, hath knit and conjoined us, we should bear a kind respect and tender affection; should cheerfully concur in undergoing the common burdens; should heartily wish and industriously promote their good, assist them in accomplishing their reasonable desires, thankfully requite the courtesies received from them, congratulate and rejoice with them in their prosperity, comfort them in their distresses, and, as we are able, relieve them; however, tenderly compassionate their disappointments, miseries, and sorrows. This renders us kind and courteous neighbours, sweet and grateful companions. It represents unto us the dreadful effects and insupportable mischiefs arising from breach of faith, contravening the obligations of solemn pacts, infringing public laws, deviating from the received rules of equity, violating promises, and interrupting good correspondence among men; by which considerations it engages us to be good citizens, obedient subjects, just dealers, and faithful friends. It minds us of the blindness, impotence, and levity, the proneness to mistake, and misbehaviour that human nature necessarily is subject to; deserving rather our commiseration, than anger or hatred; which prompts us to bear the infirmities of our brethren, to be gentle in censure, to be insensible of petty affronts, to pardon injuries, to be patient, exora-

ble, and reconcilable to those that give us greatest cause of offence. It teaches us, the good may, but the evil of our neighbour can in no wise advantage us; that from the suffering of any man, simply considered, no benefit can accrue, nor natural satisfaction arise to us; and that therefore it is a vain, base, brutish, and unreasonable thing, for any cause whatsoever, to desire or delight in the grief, pain, or misery of our neighbour, to hate or envy him, or insult over him, or devise mischief to him, or prosecute revenge upon him; which makes us civil, noble, and placable enemies, or rather no enemies at all. So that Wisdom is in effect the genuine parent of all moral and political virtue, justice, and honesty; as Solomon says in her person, *I lead in the way of righteousness, and in the midst of the paths of judgment*⁵. And how sweet these are in the practice, how comfortable in the consequences, the testimony of continual experience, and the unanimous consent of all wise men sufficiently declare. But farther,

XV. The principal advantage of Wisdom is, its acquainting us with the nature and reason of true religion, and affording convictive arguments to persuade to the practice of it; which is accompanied with the purest delight, and attended with the most solid content imaginable. I say, the nature of religion, wherein it consists, and what it requires; the mistake of which produceth daily so many mischiefs and inconveniences in the world, and exposes so good a name to so much reproach. It sheweth it consisteth not in fair professions and glorious pretences, but in real practice; not in a pertinacious adherence to any sect or party, but in a sincere love of goodness, and dislike of naughtiness, wherever discovering itself; not in vain ostentations and flourishes of outward performance, but in an inward good complexion of mind, exerting itself in works of true devotion and charity; not in a nice orthodoxy, or politic subjection of our judgments to the peremptory dictates of men, but in a sincere love of truth, in a hearty approbation of, and compliance with, the doc-

⁵ Prov. viii. 20.

trines fundamentally good, and necessary to be believed; not in harsh censuring and virulently inveighing against others, but in careful amending our own ways; not in a peevish crossness and obstinate repugnancy to received laws and customs, but in a quiet and peaceable submission to the express laws of God, and lawful commands of man; not in a furious zeal for or against trivial circumstances, but in a conscionable practising the substantial parts of religion; not in a frequent talking or contentious disputing about it, but in a ready observance of the unquestionable rules and prescripts of it; in a word, that religion consists in nothing else but doing what becomes our relation to God, in a conformity or similitude to his nature, and in a willing obedience to his holy will: to which by potent incentives it allures and persuades us; by representing to us his transcendently glorious attributes, conspicuously displayed in the frame, order, and government of the world: that wonderful Power which erected this great and goodly fabric; that incomprehensible Wisdom, which preserves it in a constant harmony; that immense Goodness, which hath so carefully provided for the various necessities, delights, and comforts of its innumerable inhabitants. I say, by representing those infinitely glorious perfections, it engages us with highest respect to esteem, reverence, and honour him. Also, by minding us of our manifold obligations to him, our receiving being, life, reason, sense, all the faculties, powers, excellencies, privileges, and commodities of our natures from him; of his tender care and loving providence continually supporting and protecting us; of his liberal beneficence, patient indulgence, and earnest desire of our good and happiness, by manifold expressions evidently manifested toward us; it inflames us with ardent love, and obliges us to officious gratitude toward him. Also, by declaring the necessary and irreconcilable contrariety of his nature to all impurity and perverseness, his peerless majesty, his irresistible power, and his all-seeing knowledge, it begets an awful dread and a devout fear of him. By discovering him

from his infinite benignity willing, and from his unlimited power only able to supply our needs, relieve us in distresses, protect us from dangers, and confer any valuable benefit upon us, it engenders faith, and encourages us to rely upon him. By revealing to us his super-eminent sovereignty, uncontrollable dominion, and unquestionable authority over us; together with the admirable excellency, wisdom, and equity of his laws, so just and reasonable in themselves, so suitable to our nature, so conducive to our good, so easy and practicable, so sweet and comfortable; it powerfully inclines, and by a gentle force, as it were, constrains us to obedience. By such efficacious inducements Wisdom urges us to all duties of religion, and withal surely directs us (as I before said) wherein it consists; teaching us to have right and worthy apprehensions of the Divine nature, to which our devotion, if true and good, must be suited and conformed; and so it frees us, as from irreligion and profane neglect of God, so from fond superstitions, the sources of so much evil to mankind. For he that wisely hath considered the wisdom, goodness, and power of God, cannot imagine God can with a regardless eye overlook his presumptuous contempts of his laws, or endure him to proceed in an outrageous defiance of Heaven, to continue hurting himself, or injuring his neighbour; nor can admit unreasonable terrors, or certain suspicious conceits of God, as of an imperious master, or implacable tyrant over him, exacting impossible performances from, or delighting in the fatal miseries of his creatures; nor can suppose him pleased with hypocritical shows, and greatly taken with superficial courtships of ceremonious address; or that he can in anywise favour our fiery zeals, fierce passions, or unjust partialities about matter of opinion and ceremony; or can do otherwise than detest all factious, harsh, uncharitable, and revengeful proceedings, of what nature, or upon what ground soever; or that he can be so inconsistent with himself, as to approve any thing but what is like himself, that is, righteousness, sincerity, and beneficence.

Lastly, Wisdom attracts the favour of God, purchaseth a glorious reward, and secureth perpetual felicity to us. *For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom.* And, *Glorious is the fruit of good labours; and the root of wisdom shall never fall away*⁶. And, *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom; And, Whoso findeth her, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord*⁷. These are the words of wise Solomon, in the book of Wisdom, and in the Proverbs. God loveth her, as most agreeable to his nature; as resembling him; as an offspring, beam, and efflux of that Wisdom which founded the earth, and established the heavens; as that which begetteth honour, love, and obedience to his commands, and truly glorifies him; and as that which promotes the good of his creatures, which he earnestly desires. And the paths she leads in are such as directly tend to the promised inheritance of joy and bliss.

Thus I have simply and plainly presented you with part of what my meditation suggested upon this subject: it remains that we endeavour to obtain this excellent endowment of soul, by the faithful exercise of our reason, careful observation of things, diligent study of the Divine law, watchful reflection upon ourselves, virtuous and religious practice; but especially, by imploring the Divine influence, the original spring of light, and fountain of all true knowledge, following St. James's advice: *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth freely.* Therefore, O everlasting Wisdom, the Maker, Redeemer, and Governor of all things, let some comfortable beams from thy great body of heavenly light descend upon us, to illuminate our dark minds, and quicken our dead hearts; to inflame us with ardent love unto Thee, and to direct our steps in obedience to thy laws, through the gloomy shades of this world, into that region of eternal light and bliss, where Thou reignest in perfect glory and majesty, one God ever blessed, world without end. Amen.

⁶ Wisd. vii. 28; iii. 15.

⁷ Prov. iii. 13; viii. 35.

SERMON II.

UPRIGHT WALKING SURE WALKING.

PROV. x. 9.

“He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely.”

THE world is much addicted to the politics; the heads of men are very busy in contrivance, and their mouths are full of talk about the ways of consulting our safety, and securing our interests. May we not therefore presume, that an infallible maxim of policy, proposing the most expedite and certain method of security in all our transactions, will be entertained with acceptance? Such an one the greatest politician and wisest man for business (if we may take God's word for it) that ever was or will be, doth here suggest to us¹. For the practice couched in our text he elsewhere voucheth for a point of policy, telling us, that *A man of understanding walketh uprightly*²: and here he recommendeth it as a method of security, *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely*.

Treating upon which *aphorism* I shall, by God's help, endeavour, first, in way of explication, briefly to describe the practice itself; then, in way of proof, by some considerations to declare, that security doth attend it

For explication. *To walk* (as well in the style of

¹ 1 Kings iii. 12.

² Prov. xv. 21.

holy Scripture, as in other writings, and even in common speech) doth signify our usual course of dealing, or the constant tenor of our practice.

Uprightly, according to the original, might be rendered, *in perfection*, or, *with integrity*³: and by the Greek translators in several places is supposed chiefly to denote sincerity and purity of intention.

In effect, the phrase, *He that walketh uprightly*⁴, doth import, one who is constantly disposed, in his designs and dealings, to bear a principal regard to the rules of his duty, and the dictates of his conscience; who, in every case emergent, is ready to perform that which upon good deliberation doth appear most just and fit, in conformity to God's law and sound reason, without being swayed by any appetite, any passion, any sinister respect to his own private interest or profit, credit, or pleasure, to the commission of any unlawful, irregular, unworthy, or base act; who generally doth act out of good principles (namely, reverence to God, charity to men, sober regard to his own true welfare); who doth aim at good ends, that is, at God's honour, public benefit, his own salvation, other good things subordinate to those, or well consistent with them; who doth prosecute his designs by lawful means, in fair ways, such as honest providence and industry, veracity and fidelity, dependence upon God's help, and prayer for his blessing: in short, one who never advisedly doth undertake any bad thing, nor any good thing to ill purposes; nor doth use any foul means to compass his intents.

For proof. That such an one doth ever proceed with much security, from the following considerations may appear:—

I. An upright walker is secure of easily finding his way. For it commonly requireth no reach of wit or depth of judgment, no laborious diligence of inquiry, no curious intentness of observation, no solicitous care

³ בתום.

⁴ "He that walketh in his uprightness, seareth the Lord."—Prov. xiv. 2.

or plodding study, to discern in any case what is just ; we need not much trouble our heads about it, for we can hardly be to seek for it. If we will but open our eyes, it lieth in view before us, being the plain, straight, obvious road, which common reason prompteth, or which ordinary instruction pointeth out to us ; so that usually that direction of Solomon is sufficient, *Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left*⁵.

The ways of iniquity and vanity (if we may call them *ways*, which indeed are but exorbitancies and seductions from the way), ill designs, and bad means of executing designs, are very unintelligible, very obscure, abstruse, and intricate ; being infinitely various, and utterly uncertain : so that out of them to pick and fix on this or that may puzzle our heads, and perplex our hearts ; as to pursue any of them may involve us in great difficulty and trouble. But the ways of truth, of right, of virtue, are so very simple and uniform, so fixed and permanent, so clear and notorious, that we can hardly miss them, or (except wilfully) swerve from them. For they by Divine Wisdom were chalked out, not only for ingenious and subtile persons (men of great parts, of refined wits, of long experience), but rather for the vulgar community of men, the great body of God's subjects, consisting in persons of meanest capacity, and smallest improvement : being designed to *make wise the simple, to give the young man knowledge and discretion*⁶ : to direct all sorts of people in their duty, toward their happiness ; according to that in the prophet, *A highway shall be there, and it shall be called The way of holiness—the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein*⁷.

They are in very legible characters graven by the finger of God upon our hearts and consciences⁸, so that by any considerate reflection inwards we may easily

⁵ Prov. iv. 25, 27 ; xvii. 24 ; xiv. 6.

⁶ Ps. xix. 7 ; cxix. 130 ; Prov. viii. 5 ; i. 4 ; Ps. cxix. 9.

⁷ Isa. xxxv. 8. Ὁδὸς καθάρη. LXX.

⁸ Rom. ii. 15 ; Isa. xxx. 21 ; Ps. xxxvii. 31.

read them: or they are extant in God's word, there written as with a sunbeam, so perspicuously expressed, so frequently inculcated, that without gross negligence or strange dulness we cannot but descry them. For who with half an eye may not see, that the practice of pious love and reverence toward God, of entire justice and charity toward our neighbour, of sober temperance and purity toward ourselves, is approved by reason, is prescribed by God to us?

Hence in the holy Scriptures, as bad ways are called dark, crooked, rough, slippery ways⁹; so the good ways are said to be clear, plain, direct, even ways¹: *The path of the just, say they, is as a shining light. All the words of my mouth are plain to him that understandeth (or, that considereth them). My foot standeth in an even place. The law of his God is in his heart, and none of his steps shall slide*².

Hence it is affirmed, that an upright man doth hardly need any conduct beside his own honesty. For, *The integrity, saith Solomon, of the upright shall guide them: and, The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way*³.

But in case such an one should ever be at a stand or at a loss, in doubt of his course, he hath always at hand a most sure guide to conduct or direct him. It is but asking the way of Him, or saying, with the Psalmist, *Shew me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths; Teach me to do thy will, and, Lead me in the way everlasting; O let me not wander from thy commandments*⁴; and then *his ears, as the prophet saith, shall hear a word behind him, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it*; then the words of the Psalmist shall be verified, *What*

⁹ Prov. iv. 19; ii. 13. 15; John viii. 12; Ps. lxxxii. 5; cxxv. 5; xxxv. 6; lxxiii. 18; Jer. xxiii. 12.

¹ Heb. xii. 13; Ps. v. 8; Luke iii. 5; Prov. iii. 23; Deut. v. 32; xxviii. 14.

² Prov. iv. 18; viii. 8, 9; xiv. 6. Πάντα ἐνώπια τοῖς συνιούσι, XX. Ps. xxvi. 12; xxxvii. 31; xxvi. 1; xvii. 5; xviii. 36.

³ Prov. xi. 3. 5.

⁴ Ps. xxv. 4; xvi. 11; xvii. 5; cxliii. 10; cxxxix. 24; cxix. 10. 27. 33. 35, &c.

*man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek he will teach his way*⁵.

Hence is the upright man happily secured from tiring pains in the search, from racking anxieties in the choice, from grating scruples and galling regrets in the pursuit of his way.

II. The upright walker doth tread upon firm ground⁶. He doth build his practice, not upon the perilous bogs, the treacherous quagmires, the devouring quicksands of uncouth, bold, impious paradoxes, (such as have been vented by Epicurus, by Machiavel, by others more lately, whose infamous names are too well known, as the effects of their pestilent notions are too much felt;) but upon solid, safe, approved, and well-tried principles; viz. these, and the like coherent with them: That there is an eternal God, incomprehensibly powerful, wise, just, and good; who is always present with us, and ever intent upon us, viewing not only all our external actions (open and secret), but our inmost cogitations, desires, and intentions, by the which our actions chiefly are to be estimated; that he, as Governor of the world, and Judge of men, doth concern himself in all human affairs, disposing and managing all events according to his righteous pleasure; exacting punctual obedience to his laws, and dispensing recompences answerable thereto; with impartial justice rewarding each man according to the purposes of his heart and the practices of his life: that all our good and happiness doth absolutely depend on God's favour; so that to please him can only be true wisdom, and to offend him the greatest folly; that virtue is incomparably the best endowment whereof we are capable, and sin the worst mischief to which we are liable: that no worldly good or evil is considerable in comparison with goods or evils spiritual: that nothing can be really profitable or advantageous to us, which doth not consist with our duty to God, doth not some ways conduce to our spiritual interest and eternal welfare: yea, that

⁵ Isa. xxx. 21; Ps. xxv. 9. 12; xxxvii. 53. ⁶ (Prov. xii. 5.)

every thing not serviceable to those purposes is either a frivolous trifle, or a dangerous snare, or a notable damage, or a woeful bane to us ; that content of mind, springing from innocence of life, from the faithful discharge of our duty, from satisfaction of conscience, from a good hope in regard to God, and our future state, is in our esteem and choice much to be preferred before all the delights which any temporal possession or fruition can afford ; and, that a bad mind is the sorest adversity which can befall us. Such are the grounds of upright practice, more firm than any rock, more unshakable than the foundations of heaven and earth ; the which are assured by the sacred oracles, and attested by many remarkable providences ; have ever been avowed by the wiser sort, and admitted by the general consent of men, as for their truth, most agreeable to reason, and for their usefulness, approved by constant experience ; the belief of them having apparently most wholesome influence upon all the concerns of life, both public and private ; indeed, being absolutely needful for upholding government, and preserving human society ; no obligation, no faith or confidence between men, no friendship or peace being able to subsist without it. Whence the practice built on such foundations must be very secure. And if God shall not cease to be, if he will not let go the reins, if his word cannot deceive, if the wisest men are not infatuated, if the common sense of mankind do not prove extravagant, if the main props of life and pillars of society do not fail ; he that walketh uprightly doth proceed on sure grounds.

III. The upright person doth walk steadily, maintaining his principal resolutions, and holding his main course, through all occasions, without flinching or wavering, or desultory inconsistency and fickleness ; his integrity being an excellent ballast, holding him tight and well poised in his deportment ; so that waves of temptation dashing on him do not make him roll in uncertainty, or topple over into unworthy practices.

Lust, passion, humour, interest, are things very mu-

table, as depending upon temper of body, casualties of time, the winds and tides of this vertiginous world : whence he that is guided or moved by them must needs be *many-minded* and *unstable in all his ways*⁷ ; will *reel to and fro like a drunken man, and be at his wif's end*⁸ ; never enjoying any settled rest of mind, or observing a smooth tenor of action. But a good conscience is very stable, and persisteth unvaried through all circumstances of time, in all vicissitudes of fortune. For it steereth by immovable pole-stars, the inviolable rules of duty ; it aimeth at marks which no force can stir out of their place ; its objects of mind and affection are not transitory ; its hopes and confidences are fixed on the *rock of ages*. Whence an upright person in all cases, and all conditions (prosperous or adverse), is the same man, and goeth the same way⁹. Contingencies of affairs do not unhinge his mind from its good purposes, or divert his foot from the right course. Let the weather be fair or foul, let the world smile or frown, let him get or lose by it, let him be favoured or crossed, commended or reproached (*by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report*¹), he will do what his duty requireth : the external state of things must not alter the moral reason of things with him. This is that which the Psalmist observeth of him : *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, for his heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord. His heart is stablished, and will not shrink*². And this the Wise Man promiseth to him : *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established*³.

Hence, a man is secured from diffidence in himself, and distraction in his mind, from frequently being off the hooks, from leading an unequal life, clashing with itself, from deluding and disappointing those with whom he converseth or dealeth, and consequently from the inconveniences issuing thence.

⁷ James i. 8.

⁸ Ps. cvii. 27.

⁹ Τετράγυρος. Justum et tenacem propositi virum, &c.—*Hor. Od. III. 3. 1.*

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 8. ² Ps. cxii. 7, 8 ; Prov. iii. 25. ³ Prov. xvi. 3.

IV. The way of uprightness is the surest for dispatch, and the shortest cut toward the execution or attainment of any good purpose; securing a man from irksome expectations and tedious delays, the which, as the Wise Man sayeth, *do make the heart sick* ⁴.

It in Scripture is called *the straight and the plain way* ⁵. And as in geometry, of all lines or surfaces contained within the same bounds, the straight line and the plain surface are the shortest; so it is also in morality: by the right line of justice, upon the plain ground of virtue, a man soonest will arrive to any well-chosen end.

In this way there are no bewildering intrigues and mazes, no crooked windings and turnings, no occasions forcing men to dance hither and thither, to skip backward and forward, to do and undo; which courses do protract business, and commonly do hinder from ever dispatching it. But a man acting justly and fairly doth continually proceed on in the direct open road, without retreat, excursion, or deflection; *not turning aside* (as the phrase is in holy writ) *to the right hand or to the left* ⁶.

To clamber over fences of duty, to break through hedges of right, to trespass upon hallowed enclosures, may seem the most short and compendious ways of getting thither where one would be: but doth not a man venture breaking his neck, or scratching his face, incurring mischief and trouble thereby? Is he not liable to the fate to which the preacher doometh him: *He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it: and whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him* ⁷? For instance, to grow rich, fraud, extortion, corruption, oppression, overreaching, and supplanting may seem the readiest and most expedite ways; but in truth they are the farthest ways about, or rather no ways at all: for that which is got by those means is not our own; nor is the possession of it truly wealth, but usurpation, or detention of spoil and rapine, which we ought to disgorge. And however

⁴ Prov. xiii. 12.

⁵ Luke iii. 5.

⁶ Prov. iv. 27; Deut. v. 32; xxviii. 14.

⁷ Eccles. x. 8.

to the getting it there are often mighty difficulties occurring from men, there are commonly insuperable obstacles interposed by God; who hath expressly condemned and cursed those ways, declaring that *wealth gotten by vanity* (or cozenage) *shall be diminished*; that *he that oppresseth to increase his riches, shall surely come to want*; that *he who* (thus) *hasteth to be rich, hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him*⁸; that *as the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool*⁹. Whereas the plain way of honest harmless industry (joined with a pious regard to him who is the Dispenser of all good things), how slow soever it may seem, is the most speedy, because the only safe way to thrive; having, beside all secondary advantages, the security of those oracles: *The hand of the diligent shall make rich: He that gathereth by labour shall increase: By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life*¹.

V. The way of uprightness is in itself very safe, free of danger, tending to no mischief; according to those sayings of the Wise Man: *There shall no evil happen to the just: In the way of righteousness is life; and in the path thereof there is no death*².

He who designeth only that which is just and reasonable, who innocently and fairly prosecuteth his intent, can run no great hazard, cannot fall into any extreme disaster, cannot irrecoverably sink into miserable disappointment³.

He probably will not receive much harm from men, or trouble from the world: for as he meaneth innocently, as he dealeth inoffensively (not violently assailing, nor fraudulently circumventing, not anywise inju-

⁸ Prov. xxiii. 10, 11; xiii. 11; xxii. 16; xxviii. 22, 20; xxi. 6.

⁹ Jer. xvii. 11.

¹ Prov. x. 4; xxviii. 19; xiii. 11; xxii. 4; Ps. cxii. 3.

² Prov. xxviii. 18; xvi. 17; xiii. 6; x. 29; xii. 21, 28.

³ Ps. xxxvii. 24.

riously or maliciously abusing any man), as he doth yield no just provocation or urgent temptation to oppose him; so he is not very likely to meet with obstructions or crosses thwarting his designs. He can hardly raise up adversaries, at least such as will prove very formidable, or very fierce and implacable toward him.

He may be sure that few wise men, and no good men, will trouble him; but that such rather will afford their countenance and furtherance to his undertakings.

But assuredly he shall have the favourable protection of Almighty God, who thoroughly knowing his heart, and observing the righteousness of his intentions and proceedings, will not suffer him to incur any notable, destructive, remediless calamity. His prayer, dictated by good conscience, *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me*, will certainly be heard: God having passed his word for it in numberless places of Scripture⁴; particularly in those remarkable words of Isaiah: *He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: his bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure*⁵. That is, a man who is constantly upright in his dealings, shall by the Divine Providence be infallibly and impregably preserved from any grievous mischief, from any sore want, from any extreme distress.

The way of uprightness is ever guarded with angels, ready to promote the affairs of the honest person, or at least to protect him from evil. He may hopefully say to himself, as Abraham did to his servant, *The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way*⁶: or he confidently may apply to himself that of the Psalmist, *He shall give his angels*

⁴ Ps. xxv. 21; (Prov. xiii. 6; xi. 6;) Prov. ii. 7; xviii. 10; xxviii. 18; xxix. 25; Ps. xviii. 2. 30. 35; xxiii. 4; xxiv. 4, 5; Job xi. 14, 15.

⁵ Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16.

⁶ Gen. xxiv. 40.

*charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone*⁷.

However, the sequel will be tolerable: whatever the success of his undertaking be, it can be no ruin, no slur, no heart-breaking to him. His conscience is safe, his credit is entire, his hopes are good; he is perfectly secure from being tainted with foul guilt, from being exposed to due reproach, from being stung with vexatious remorse, from being plunged into a gulf of desperation or disconsolateness. For,

VI. The way of uprightness is fair and pleasant. He that walketh in it hath good weather, and a clear sky about him; a hopeful confidence and a cheerful satisfaction do ever wait upon him. *It is joy, as the Wise Man saith, to the just to do judgment*⁸.

Being conscious to himself of an honest meaning, and a due course of prosecuting it, he feeleth no check or struggling of mind, no regret or sting of heart⁹; being thoroughly satisfied and pleased with what he is about, his judgment approving, and his will acquiescing in his procedure as worthy of himself, agreeable to reason, and conformable to his duty.

He therefore briskly moveth forward with alacrity and courage; there being within him nothing to control or countermand him, to pull him back, to make him halt, to distract or disturb him.

Nor hardly can any thing abroad dismay or discourage him. For he may reasonably hope for the good will of men, and cannot hugely dread their opposition. He may strongly presume upon the propitious aspect and favourable succour of Heaven, which always smileth and casteth benign influences on honest undertakings¹.

He that hath chosen a good way may with assurance commend his way to God's providence; he may depend upon God for his concurrent benediction; he, with an humble boldness, may address prayers to God for his

⁷ Ps. xci. 11, 12.

² Prov. xxiii. 17, 18.

⁸ Prov. xxi. 15.

¹ Prov. xi. 20.

protection and aid². He, so doing, hath interest in divers clear declarations and express promises of good success; such as those: *Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth: he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and will save them*³.

He may dare to refer his case to the severest examination, saying with Job, *Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity*⁴; and with the Psalmist, *Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me*⁵.

He with an humble confidence can appeal to God, borrowing the words of Hezekiah, *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight*⁶.

Hence, *The hope of the righteous*, as the Wise Man telleth us, *is gladness*⁷. He, considering the goodness, the justice, the fidelity of God, whereof his integrity doth render him capable and a proper object, cannot but conceive a comfortable hope of a good issue.

And obtaining success he doth not only enjoy the material pleasure thereof, but the formal satisfaction that it is indeed good success, or a blessing indulged to him by special favour of God; enabling him to say with the Psalmist, *The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God*⁸.

However, an upright dealer hath this comfortable reserve, that whatever doth befall him, however the business goeth, he shall not condemn and punish himself with remorse; he shall not want a consolation able to

² Jer. xxxii. 19; Prov. xxiv. 14; Heb. iv. 16.

³ Ps. xxxvii. 5; lv. 22; Prov. xvi. 3; Eccus. ii. 10; Ps. xxxiv. 22; xxvi. 1; xxxiii. 21; Prov. x. 24; Ps. clxv. 18, 19; xxxiv. 15; xxvi. 11; Job xxii. 27.

⁴ Job xxxi. 6.

⁵ Ps. vii. 8; xxvi. 1.

⁶ 2 Kings xx. 3.

⁷ Prov. x. 28.

⁸ Ps. xviii. 20, 21.

support and to erect his mind. He shall triumph, if not in the felicity of his success, yet in the integrity of his heart, and the innocence of his deportment; even as blessed Job did under all the pressures of his adversity: for, *Till I die*, said he, *I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live*⁹.

So true it is upon all accounts, that according to that assertion in the Psalm, *Light is sown for the righteous, and joyful gladness for the upright in heart*¹.

VII. He that walketh uprightly is secure as to his honour and credit. He is sure not to come off disgracefully, either at home in his own apprehensions, or abroad in the estimations of men. He doth not blush at what he is doing, nor doth reproach himself for what he hath done. No blemish or blame can stick upon his proceeding.

By pure integrity, a man first maintaineth a due respect and esteem for himself; then preserveth an entire reputation with others; he reflecteth on his own heart with complacency, and looketh upon the world with confidence. He hath no fear of being detected, or care to smother his intents. He is content that his thoughts should be sounded, and his actions sifted to the bottom. He could even wish that his breast had windows, that his heart were transparent, that all the world might see through him, and descry the clearness of his intentions. The more curiously his ways are marked, the more exactly his dealings are scanned, the more thoroughly his designs are penetrated and known; the greater approbation he is sure to receive.

The issue of things assuredly will be creditable to him; and when the day-light hath scattered all mists, hath cleared all misprisions and mistakes, his reputation will shine most brightly; the event declaring that he had no corrupt ends; the course of his proceedings being justified by the very light of things.

⁹ Job xxvii. 5, 6.

¹ Ps. xcvi. 11.

God himself will be concerned to vindicate his reputation, not suffering him to be considerably defamed; according to that promise, *He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day*². That in Job will be made good to him, *Then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot*³. And he may confidently aver with the Psalmist, *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments*⁴.

If he findeth good success, it will not be invidious, appearing well deserved, and fairly procured: it will be truly honourable, as a fruit and recompence of virtue, as a mark and pledge of the Divine favour toward him.

If he seemeth disappointed, yet he will not be disparaged⁵: wise and candid men will excuse him; good men will patronise his cause; no man of sense and ingenuity will insult on his misfortune. *He shall not, as the Psalmist assureth, be ashamed in an evil time*⁶. Yea, often his repute from under a cloud will shine, if not with so glaring splendour, yet with a pleasant lustre; uprightness disposing him to bear adverse events with a graceful decency.

VIII. The particular methods of acting which uprightness disposeth to observe, do yield great security from troubles and crosses in their transactions.

What is the conduct of the upright man? He is clear, frank, candid, harmless, consistent in all his behaviour, his discourse, his dealing. His heart commonly may be seen in his face, his mind doth ever suit with his speech, his deeds have a just correspondence with his professions; he never faileth to perform what he doth promise, and to satisfy the expectations which he hath raised⁷.

He doth not wrap himself in clouds, that none may see him where he is, or know how to find him; may discern what he is about, or whither he tendeth.

He disguiseth not his intents with fallacious pre-

² Ps. xxxvii. 6. 19; xxxiv. 5; 1 Pet. ii. 6.

³ Job xi. 15.

⁴ Ps. cxix. 6. 39. 46.

⁵ Ps. xci. 15.

⁶ Ps. xxxvii. 19.

⁷ Prov. xiii. 5; Ps. xxxvi. 3, 4; xxxiv. 13; xv. 2.

tences of conscience, of public good, of special friendship and respect ^a.

He doth use no disingenuous, spiteful, unjust tricks or sleights, to serve the present turn.

He layeth no baits or snares *to catch men*, alluring them into mischief or inconvenience ^b.

As he doth not affect any poor base ends, so he will not defile his fair intentions by sordid means of compassing them; such as are illusive simulations and subdolous artifices, treacherous collusions, sly insinuations and sycophantic detractions, versatile whifflings and dodgings, flattering colloquings and glozings, servile crouchings and fawnings, and the like ^c.

He hath little of the serpent (none of its lurking insidiousness, of its surprising violence, of its rancorous venom, of its keen mordacity), but much of the dove, (all its simplicity, its gentleness, its fidelity, its innocence) in his conversation and commerce ^d.

His wisdom is ever tempered with sincerity, and seasoned with humanity, with meekness, with charity; being *the wisdom which is from above, first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy* ^e.

He sometimes may prudently reserve his mind, not venting it by foolish loquacity: but his words do never clash with his meaning, so as to deceive or disappoint any man ^f.

He may warily prevent harm, and decline perils: but it is without hurtful countermining, or devising mischief on his neighbour ^g.

He may discreetly pick out seasons, and embrace opportunities of righting or benefiting himself: but he

^a Prov. x. 18.

^b Jer. v. 26. (Ps. lxiv. 5; lvi. 6; ix. 15; vii. 15; x. 2; lvii. 6; xxxv. 7; cxl. 5; Prov. xxvi. 27; Eccles. x. 8.)

^c Ps. x. 7; lv. 21; lxiv. 6; x. 9, 10; lvi. 5; Rom. xvi. 18; Eccles. xix. 26.

^d 2 Sam. xv. 5; Prov. xi. 9; xxvi. 25.

^e James iii. 17.

^f Prov. xiv. 33; xxix. 11; xiii. 3. 16; xxi. 23; xii. 23; Eccles. xx. 7.

^g Prov. xxii. 3; xxvii. 12; xiv. 8. 15, 16.

never will seek or lay hold of advantages to prejudice others⁶.

He sometimes may repress insurrections of anger or disgust: but he never doth allow them to bake into rancour or malice⁷.

He may be apt to use courteous, affable, obliging demeanour, serving to breed friendships, and to stifle enmities: but he never thereby meaneth to gull, inveigle, and entrap men; or to procure instruments and aids of any perverse design.

He is no enemy to himself, but (according to the obligations of reason and conscience) he hath always a regard to the good of others; nor is ever so selfish, as to be unjust or uncharitable to any man.

The principal engines he doth employ for achieving his enterprises are, a careful and cautious providence in contriving, a sedulous and steady diligence in acting, a circumspect heedfulness not to provoke any man by offensive carriage, by injury, by discourtesy, to obstruct him; but rather by kind demonstrations and real beneficence to engage men to further him in his proceedings: but especially his main instrument, wherein he most confideth, is devout supplication to God for his succour and blessing.

Now, is not this conduct the most secure that can be? doth it not afford many great commodities and advantages? doth it not exempt from manifold fears, and cares, and crosses, and slaveries?

It cannot but derive blessings from the God of truth, the great friend of simplicity and sincerity, the hater of falsehood and guile⁸.

And, humanly regarding things, he that useth these methods doth from them obtain many conveniences. He doth not lie under perpetual constraint, engaged to keep a constant guard upon himself, to watch his memory, to curb his tongue, to manage his very looks and gestures, lest they betray his intentions, and disclose his plots. He is not at the trouble of stopping holes,

⁶ Eccles. viii. 5.

⁷ Prov. xii. 16; xix. 11.

⁸ Prov. xii. 19, 22.

of mending flaws, of patching up repugnances in his actions, that his mind do not break through them. He is not afraid of the disappointment and shame which attend the detection of unworthy designs. He is not at pains to obviate the jealousies, the surmises, the diffidences, the counterplots, the preventive oppositions and assaults, which gloomy closeness and crafty dissimulation ever do raise against the practisers of them⁹. In fine, men do not shun the conversation and the commerce of an upright person, but gladly do consort and deal with him; do seek his acquaintance and alliance: they are not apt to distrust him, to suspect him, to be shy and reserved in their intercourse with him; but readily do place an entire confidence in him, and use a clear frankness toward him. No man doth fear him as dangerous, or will cross him as an adversary. Whence as he seldom hath cause to fear, or occasion to contest with others; so he doth undisturbedly enjoy the benefits of society with great safety, ease, and comfort.

IX. Lastly, an upright walker hath perfect security, as to the final result of affairs, that he shall not be quite baffled in his expectations and desires. And if prosperity doth consist in a satisfaction of mind concerning events, he cannot fail of most prosperous success. *Whatsoever he doeth*, saith the Psalmist of him, *it shall prosper*¹. How is that? Doth he, if he warreth, always get the victory? is he perpetually, when he tradeth, a considerable gainer? will he certainly after sowing, reap a plentiful crop? Probably yes; and perhaps no. Yet assuredly he shall prosper, in the true notion of prosperity, explained by those divine sayings: *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever. Surely I know it shall be well with them that fear God*².

He cannot be much defeated in his purposes; for, as

⁹ Prov. xxvi. 25; x. 18; xxi. 6; Ps. xxvi. 4.

¹ Ps. i. 3; Prov. xii. 21.

² Ps. xxxvii. 37; Isa. xxxii. 17; Eccles. viii. 12.

to his general, principal, absolute designs, (that is, his design of pleasing God, and procuring his favour; his design of satisfying himself, and discharging his conscience; his design of promoting his own spiritual interest, and saving his soul; his design of doing good, of exercising charity to his neighbour, of serving the public, of obliging the world by virtuous example, and by real beneficence;) these he cannot fail thoroughly to accomplish: nothing can obstruct him in the prosecution: nothing can debar him from the execution of these undertakings: in spite of all the world, by the succour of that Divine grace which ever doth favour and further such designs, he most happily will achieve them. And for other inferior designs, he can hardly be crossed in regard to them; for it is an essential part of integrity, not otherwise to affect or aim at private secular interests, than under condition, and with a reservation, if it be God's pleasure, if it seem good to Divine wisdom. He knoweth that his pains employed on any honest purpose, in a fair way (be it to procure some worldly advantage for himself, for his relations, or for his friends), are not lost, if they have the fruit of submission to God's will, and acquiescence in the event disposed by him. He is assured that it is good luck to have his project blasted, and that missing is better than getting, when by sovereign wisdom it is so determined. He therefore could not so fix his heart, or engage his affection in any such concern, that his mind is surprised, or his passions discomposed by a seeming adverseness of events to his endeavours. So that in effect he can have no bad success. For how can that occurrence be deemed bad, which plain reason dictateth in certain judgment to be most expedient for him; about which he ever was very indifferent, and with which at present he is not heartily displeased? How can it be taken for disappointment and misfortune, which one was prepared to embrace with satisfaction and complacence?

Yea, to a person so disposed, that success which seemeth most adverse, justly may be reputed the best and most happy, as promoting ends incomparably more

excellent than any worldly gain; as producing fruits exceedingly more wholesome and more savoury than any temporal commodity; as exercising and improving the divinest virtues (humility, patience, meekness, moderation, contentedness), a grain whereof is worth all the wealth, all the preferment, all that is desirable in the world.

Wherefore let the worst that can arrive (or that which human blindness and fondness do count the worst), yet upright persons do not come off ill, or so (matters being rightly stated) as to be losers upon the foot of the account.

If this do not satisfy grosser apprehensions, we may add, that even in these meaner concerns Almighty God is pleased commonly to reward and encourage upright persons by the best success. For he hath, as it were, a natural inclination to gratify those who desire to please him; and, as the Psalmist expresseth it, *hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants*³. He may seem concerned in honour to countenance those who have regard to his will, and who repose confidence in his aid; discriminating them from such as presume to act against or without him, in defiance to his will, with no deference to his providence. As they do render him his due respect, by submitting to his authority, and avowing his power; so he will acknowledge them by signally favouring their concerns⁴. Even his truth and fidelity are engaged in their behalf; seeing he very often hath declared and promised, that in all matters, and upon all occasions, he will be ready to bless them⁵.

X. To conclude; it is an infinite advantage of upright dealing, that at the last issue, when all things shall be most accurately tried and impartially decided, a man is assured to be fully justified in it, and plentifully rewarded for it⁶. As then all the deceits, which now pass under specious masks, shall be laid bare⁷; all

³ Ps. xxxv. 27; Prov. xi. 20; xv. 9.

⁴ Prov. xiv. 2.

⁵ Deut. xxviii. 2; xxx. 9; Ps. cxxviii. 1, 2; xci. 1; xxxiv. 9, 10; lxxxiv. 11; Matt. vi. 33; Eccles. viii. 5.

⁶ Prov. xxviii. 10, 20; x. 6.

⁷ Prov. xi. 18.

varnish of pretence shall be wiped off; all perverse intrigues shall be unravelled; all wicked and base intentions shall be quite stripped of the veils which now enfold them; all shrewd contrivers and engineers of mischief, all practisers of unjust and malicious guile, shall be exposed to shame, *shall lie down in sorrow*⁸: so then *the righteous man shall stand in great boldness*; his case will be rightly stated, and fully cleared from slanderous aspersions, from odious surmises, from unlucky prejudices and mistakes: what he hath done shall be approved; what he hath suffered shall be repaired. So that it then evidently will appear, that upright simplicity is the deepest wisdom, and perverse craft the merest shallowness; that he who is true and just to others, is most faithful and friendly to himself; that whoever doth abuse his neighbour, is his own greatest cheater and foe. For, *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, every man's work shall be made manifest*⁹. *The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God*¹. Unto which our upright Judge, *the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen*².

⁸ Isa. l. 11.¹ 1 Cor. iii. 13; iv. 5.⁹ Rom. ii. 16.² 1 Tim. i. 17.

SERMON III.

NOT TO OFFEND IN WORD, AN EVIDENCE OF A HIGH
PITCH OF VIRTUE.

JAMES iii. 2.

“If any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man.”

THIS sentence stands in the head of a discourse concerning the tongue (that doubtful engine of good and evil), wherein how excellent benefits, and how grievous mischiefs, it, as rightly or perversely wielded, is apt to produce; how it is both a sweet instrument of all goodness, and a sharp weapon of all iniquity, is positively laid down, and by fit comparisons illustrated. But secluding all relation to the context, the words may well be considered singly by themselves: and as such they instruct us, asserting a certain truth; they direct us, implying a good duty. They assert that man to be perfect, who offends not in speech; and they consequently imply, that we should strive to avoid offending therein: for to *be perfect*, and to *go on to perfection*, are precepts, the observance whereof is incumbent on us¹. We shall first briefly explain the assertion, and then declare its truth; afterwards we shall press somewhat couched in the duty.

To *offend*, originally signifies to *impinge*², that is, to

¹ Deut. xviii. 13; Luke vi. 40; Matt. v. 48; xix. 21; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Heb. vi. 1.

² Εἰ τις ἐν λόγῳ οὐ πταίει.

stumble, or hit dangerously upon somewhat lying cross our way, so as thereby to be cast down, or at least to be disordered in our posture, and stopped in our progress: whence it is well transferred to denote our being through any incident temptation brought into sin, whereby a man is thrown down, or bowed from his upright state, and interrupted from prosecuting a steady course of piety and virtue. By an usual and apposite manner of speaking, our tenor of life is called *a way*, our conversation *walking*, our actions *steps*, our observing good laws *uprightness*, our transgression of them *tripping, faltering, falling*³.

By *not offending in word*, we may easily, then, conceive to be understood such a constant restraint, and such a careful guidance of our tongue, that it doth not transgress the rules prescribed unto it by Divine law, or by good reason; that it thwarteth not the natural ends and proper uses for which it was framed, to which it is fitted; such as chiefly are, promoting God's glory, our neighbour's benefit, and our own true welfare.

By *a perfect man*⁴ is meant a person accomplished and complete in goodness, one of singular worth and integrity, a brave and excellent man, who, as to the continual tenor of his life, is free from all notorious defects, and heinous faults; like David, *fulfilling all God's will, and having respect to all God's commandments*; like Zachary and Elisabeth, *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*⁵. Thus was Noah, thus was Abraham, thus was Job perfect⁶. This is the notion of *perfection* in holy Scripture: not an absolute exemption from all blemish of soul, or blame in life; for such a perfection is inconsistent with the nature and state of man here, where none with modesty or with truth can say, *I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin*⁷; where every man must confess with Job, *If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it shall*

³ Ps. xxxvii. 23, 24.

⁴ James i. 4.

⁵ Acts xiii. 22; Ps. cxix. 6; Luke i. 6.

⁶ Gen. vi. 9; xvii. 1; Job i. 1.

⁷ Prov. xx. 9.

*prove me perverse*⁸. For, *There is not, as the Preacher assures, a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not*⁹; and, *In many things we offend all*, is our Apostle's assertion, immediately preceding my text; which words may serve to expound these. *In many things*, saith he, *we offend all*; that is, there is no man absolutely perfect: but, *if any man offend not in word* (that is, if a man constantly govern his tongue well), *that man is perfect*; perfect in such a kind and degree as human frailty doth admit; he is eminently good; he may be reasonably presumed upright and blameless in all the course of his practice; *able* (as it follows) *to bridle the whole body*, that is, qualified to order all his actions justly and wisely. So that in effect the words import this; that a constant governance of our speech, according to duty and reason, is a high instance and a special argument of a thoroughly sincere and solid goodness.

The truth of which aphorism may from several considerations appear.

1. A good governance of speech is a strong evidence of a good mind; of a mind pure from vicious desires, calm from disorderly passions, void of dishonest intentions. For since speech is a child of thought, which the mind always travaileth and teemeth with, and which after its birth is wont in features to resemble its parent; since every man naturally is ambitious to propagate his conceits, and without a painful force cannot smother his resentments; since especially bad affections, like stum or poison, are impetuous and turgid, so agitating all the spirits, and so swelling the heart, that it cannot easily compose or contain them¹; since a distempered constitution of mind, as of body, is wont to weaken the retentive faculty, and to force an evacuation of bad humours; since he that wanteth the principal wisdom of well-ordering his thoughts, and mastering his passions, can hardly be conceived so prudent, as long to refrain.

⁸ Job ix. 20.

⁹ Eccles. vii. 20.

¹ Ecclus. xix. 11.—“A fool travaileth with a word, as a woman in labour of a child.”

or to regulate their dependence, speech ; considering these things, I say, it is scarce possible, that he which commonly thinks ill, should constantly either be well silent, or speak well. To conceal fire, to check lightning, to confine a whirlwind, may perhaps be no less feasible, than to keep within due compass the exorbitant motions of a soul, wherein reason hath lost its command, so that *qua data porta*, where the next passage occurs, they should not rush forth, and vent themselves. A vain mind naturally will bubble forth or fly out in frothy expressions ; wrath burning in the breast will flame out, or at least smoke through the mouth ; rancorous imposthumes of spite and malice will at length discharge purulent matter ; lust boiling within will soon foam out in lewd discourse. If the fountain itself is polluted, or infected, how can the streams be clear or wholesome ? *How can ye, being evil, speak good things ?* saith our Lord ; *for from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* A good man, addeth he, *out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things ; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things* ² : ἐκβάλλει πονηρὰ, *he casteth forth ill things*, as a fountain doth its waters by a natural and necessary ebullition. It is true, that in some particular cases, or at some times, a foul heart may be disguised by fair words, or covered by demure reservedness : shame, or fear, or crafty design, may often repress the declaration of ill thoughts and purposes. But such fits of dissimulation cannot hold ; men cannot abide quiet under so violent constraints : the intestine jars, or unkindly truces, between heart and tongue (those natural friends) cannot be perpetual, or very durable : no man can hold his breath long, or live without evaporating through his mouth those steams of passion which arise from flesh and blood. *My heart was hot within me ; while I was musing, the fire burned ; then spake I with my tongue* ³, saith David, expressing the difficulty of obstructing the eruption of our affections into language. Hence

² Matt. xii. 34.

³ Ps. xxxix. 3.

it is, that speech is commonly judged the truest character of the mind, and the surest test of inward worth⁴, as that which discloseth the *hidden man of the heart*⁵, which unlocketh the closets of the breast, which draws the soul out of her dark recesses into open light and view, which rendereth our thoughts visible, and our intentions palpable. Hence *Loquere, ut te videam*, Speak, that I may see you, or know what kind of man you are, is a saying which all men, at first meeting, do in their hearts direct one to another: neither commonly doth any man require more to ground a judgment upon concerning the worth or ability of another, than opportunity of hearing him to discourse for a competent time: yea, often before a man hath spoken ten words, his mind is caught, and a formal sentence is passed upon it. Such a strict affinity and connexion do all men suppose between thoughts and words.

2. From hence, that the use of speech is itself a great ingredient into our practice, and hath a very general influence upon whatever we do, may be inferred, that whoever governeth it well, cannot also but well order his whole life. The extent of speech must needs be vast, since it is nearly commensurate to thought itself, which it ever closely traceth, widely ranging through all the immense variety of objects; so that men almost as often speak incogitantly, as they think silently. Speech is indeed the rudder that steereth human affairs, the spring that setteth the wheels of action on going; the hands work, the feet walk, all the members and all the senses act by its direction and impulse; yea, most thoughts are begotten, and most affections stirred up hereby; it is itself most of our employment, and what we do beside it, is however guided and moved by it. It is the profession and trade of many, it is the practice of all men, to be in a manner continually talking. The chief and most considerable sort of men manage all their concerns merely by words; by them princes rule their subjects, generals command their armies, senators deliberate and debate about the great

⁴ Ἄνδρος χαρακτήρ ἐκ λόγου γνωρίζεται.

⁵ 1 Pet. iii. 4.

matters of state : by them advocates plead causes, and judges decide them ; divines perform their offices, and minister their instructions ; merchants strike up their bargains, and drive on all their traffic. Whatever, almost, great or small, is done in the court or in the hall, in the church or at the exchange, in the school or in the shop, it is the tongue alone that doeth it ; it is the force of this little machine that turneth all the human world about. It is indeed the use of this strange organ which rendereth human life, beyond the simple life of other creatures, so exceedingly various and compounded ; which creates such a multiplicity of business, and which transacts it ; while by it we communicate our secret conceptions, transfusing them into others ; while therewith we instruct and advise one another ; while we consult about what is to be done, contest about right, dispute about truth ; while the whole business of conversation, of commerce, of government, and administration of justice, of learning, and of religion, is managed thereby ; yea, while it stoppeth the gaps of time, and filleth up the wide intervals of business, our recreations and diversements (the which do constitute a great portion of our life) mainly consisting therein, so that, in comparison thereof, the execution of what we determine and all other action do take up small room : and even all that usually dependeth upon foregoing speech, which persuadeth, or counselleth, or commandeth it. Whence the province of speech being so very large, it being so universally concerned, either immediately as the matter, or by consequence as the source of our actions, he that constantly governeth it well, may justly be esteemed to live very excellently.

3. To govern the tongue well is a matter of exceeding difficulty, requiring not only hearty goodness, but great judgment and art, together with much vigilance and circumspection ; whence the doing it argues a high pitch of virtue. For since the tongue is a very loose and versatile engine, which the least breath of thought doth stir, and set on going any way, it cannot but need

much attention to keep it either in a steady rest, or in a right motion. Since numberless swarms of things roving in the fancy, do thence incessantly obtrude themselves upon the tongue, very much application of mind and great judgment are requisite to select out of them those few which are good and fit, rejecting all that is bad, and improper to be spoken. Since continually temptations occur provoking or alluring to miscarriage in this kind, (for beside internal propensions and commotions of soul, every object we behold, every company we are engaged in, every accident befalling us, doth suggest somewhat inviting thereto; the condition of our neighbour moving us, if high, to flatter—if low, to insult; our own fortune prompting, if prosperous, to boast—if cross, to murmur; any action drawing from us, if it pleaseth us, fond admiration—if it disliketh, harsh censure: since, I say, we are thus at every turn obnoxious to speak amiss,) it must be matter of huge skill and caution, of mighty industry and resolution, to decline it. We for that purpose need to imitate that earnest and watchful care of the holy Psalmist, which he thus expresseth: *I have* (saith he) *purposed that my mouth shall not offend*: and, *I said*, (saith he again) *I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me*⁶. And thus to maintain a constant guard over his heart and ways, thus in consequence thereof to curb and rule his speech well, must assuredly be the mark of a very good person. Especially considering, that,

4. Irregular speech hath commonly divers more advantages for it, and fewer checks upon it, than other bad practice hath. A man is apt, I mean, to speak ill with less dissatisfaction and regret from within; he may do it with less control and less hazard from without, than he can act ill. Bad actions are gross and bulky, taking up much time, and having much force spent on them, whence men easily observe and consider them in themselves and others; but ill words are sub-

⁶ Ps. xvii. 3; xxxix. 1.

tile and transient, soon born, and as soon deceased; whence men rashly utter them without much heed before them, or much reflection after them. Bad actions have also usually visible effects immediately consequent on them; but words operate insensibly and at distance; so that men hardly discern what will follow them, or what they have effected. There are also frequent occasions of speaking ill upon presumption of secrecy, and thence of indisturbance and impunity; yea, doing so is often entertained with complacency, and encouraged with applause; the vilest abuses of speech (even blasphemy, treason, and slander themselves) may be safely whispered into ears which will receive them with pleasure and commendation. Bad language also in most cases is neither strictly prohibited, nor severely chastised by human laws, as bad action is. Whence ordinarily the guilt of this misbehaviour seems little or none; and persons much practising it, both in their own conceit, and in the opinion of others, do often pass for innocent. Men, indeed, here will hardly discern any rule, or acknowledge any obligation: the tongue they deem is free, and any words may be dispensed with: it is sufficient if they abstain from doing gross wrong or mischief, they have a right and liberty to say any thing, *our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?* so are men commonly prone to say, with those in the Psalm. Hence whosoever, notwithstanding such encouragements to offend herein, and so few restraints from it, doth yet carefully forbear it, governing his tongue according to rules of duty and reason, may justly be reputed a very good man. Farthermore,

5. Whereas most of the enormities, the mischiefs, and the troubles, whereby the souls of men are defiled, their minds discomposed, and their lives disquieted, are the fruits of ill-governed speech; it being that chiefly which perverteth justice, which soweth dissensions, which raiseth all bad passions and animosities, which embroileth the world in seditions and factions,

⁷ Ps. xii. 4.

by which men wrong and abuse, deceive and seduce, defame and disgrace one another, whereby consequently innumerable vexations and disturbances are created among men; he that by well governing his speech preserveth himself from the guilt, disengageth his mind and life from the inconveniences of all such evils (from the discreet and honest management thereof, enjoying both innocence and peace), must necessarily be, as a very wise and happy, so a very good and worthy person.

6. His tongue also so ruled cannot but produce very good fruits of honour to God, of benefit to his neighbour, of comfort to himself: it will be sweet and pleasant, it will be wholesome and useful; endearing conversation, cementing peaceful society, breeding and nourishing love, instructing and edifying, or cheering and comforting the hearers. His *tongue is health*; his *mouth is a well and tree of life*; his *lips disperse knowledge*; he *shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth*; *every man shall kiss his lips*^a. Such, as the Wise Man telleth us, are the effects of innocent, sober, and well-ordered discourse; the which do much commend their author, and declare the excellent virtue of that tree from which such fruits do grow.

7. Lastly, the observation how unusual this practice is, in any good degree, may strongly assure the excellency thereof. For the rarer, especially in morals, any good thing is, the more noble and worthy it is; that rarity arguing somewhat of peculiar difficulty in the attainment or the achievement thereof. Nothing is more obvious to common experience, than that persons, who in the rest of their demeanour and dealings appear blameless, yea, who in regard to other points of duty would seem nice and precise, are extremely peccant in this kind. We may see divers, otherwise much restraining and much denying themselves, who yet indulge themselves in a strange licentiousness in speaking whatever their humour or their passion dictates. Many in

^a Prov. xii. 18; x. 11; xv. 4; xii. 14; xiii. 2, 3; xv. 23; xxiv. 26.

other respects harmless (who would not for any thing smite or slay folks), we may observe with their tongues to commit horrible outrages upon any man that comes in their way. Frequently persons very punctual in their dealings are very unjust in their language, cheating and robbing their neighbour of his reputation by envious detraction and hard censure. They who abhor shedding a man's blood will yet, without any scruple or remorse, by calumnious tales and virulent reproaches, assassinate his credit, and murder his good name, although to him perhaps far more dear and precious than his life. Commonly such as are greatly staunch in other enjoyments of pleasure, are enormously intemperate in speaking, and very incontinent of their tongue: men in all other parts of morality rigorously sober, are often in this very wild and dissolute. Yea, not seldom we may observe, that even mighty pretenders to godliness, and zealous practisers of devotion, cannot forbear speaking things plainly repugnant to God's law, and very prejudicial to his honour. Thus it is observable to be now; and thus we may suppose that it always hath been. So of his time St. Hierome (or rather St. Paulinus, in his excellent Epistle to Celantia) testifies: *Such a lust (saith he concerning the ill governance of speech) of this evil hath invaded the minds of men, that even those who have far receded from other vices, do yet fall into this, as into the last snare of the devil*⁹. So it appears that among all sorts of good practice, the strict governance of the tongue is least ordinary, and consequently, that it is most admirable and excellent. And this is all I shall say for confirmation of the point asserted.

Now, then, as it is our duty to aim at perfection, or to endeavour the attainment of integrity in heart and life, so we should especially labour to govern our tongue, and guard it from offence. To which purpose it is requisite, that we should well understand and consider the nature of those several offences to which speech is

⁹ Tanta hujus mali libido mentes hominum invasit, ut etiam qui procul ab aliis vitiis recesserunt, in istud tamen, quasi in extremum diaboli laqueum, incidant.—*Ad Celant.*

liable, together with the special pravity, deformity, and inconvenience of each: for did we know and weigh them, we should not surely either like or dare to incur them.

The offences of speech are many and various in kind; so many as there be of thought and of action, unto which they do run parallel: accordingly they well may be distinguished from the difference of objects which they do especially respect. Whence, 1. some of them are committed against God, and confront piety; 2. others against our neighbour, and violate justice, or charity, or peace; 3. others against ourselves, infringing sobriety, discretion, or modesty; or, 4. some are of a more general and abstracted nature, rambling through all matters, and crossing all the heads of duty. It is true, that in most, or in all offences of speech, there is a complication of impiety, iniquity, and imprudence; for that by all sorts of ill speaking we sin against God, and break his commandment; we injure our neighbour, at least by contagion and bad example; we abuse ourselves, contracting guilt, and exposing ourselves to punishment: also the general vices of speech (unadvisedness and vanity) do constantly adhere to every bad word: yet commonly each evil speech hath a more direct and immediate aspect upon some one of those objects (God, our neighbour, or ourselves), and is peculiarly repugnant to one of those capital virtues (piety, charity, and sobriety) unto which all our duty is reduced. Now, according to this distinction, I should, if time would give leave, describe and dissuade particularly all these sorts of offence: but (since I must be respectful to patience, and careful myself not to offend in speech) I shall confine the rest of my present Discourse to the first sort, the offences against piety; and even of them I shall (waving the rest) only touch two or three, insinuating some reasons why we should eschew them. These are—

I. Speaking blasphemously against God, or reproachfully concerning religion, or to the disgrace of piety, with intent to subvert men's faith in God, or to impair

their reverence of Him¹. There hath been a race of men (and would to God that race were not even till now continued), concerning whom the Psalmist said, *They speak loftily, they set their mouth against the heavens*²; who, like the proud Sennacherib, *lift up their eyes, and exalt their voice against the Holy One of Israel*; who, with the profane Antiochus, *speak marvellous things against the God of gods*³. This of all impieties is the most prodigiously gigantic, the most signal practice of enmity towards God, and downright waging of war against heaven. Of all *weapons formed against God*⁴, the tongue most notoriously doth impugn him; for we cannot reach heaven with our hands, or immediately assault God by our actions: other ill practice indeed obliquely, or by consequence, dishonoureth God, and defameth goodness; but profane discourse is directly levelled at them, and doth immediately touch them, as its formal objects. Now doing thus argueth an extremity both of folly and naughtiness: for he that doeth it, either believeth the existence of God, and the truth of religion; or he distrusts them. If he doth believe them, what a desperate madness is it in him, advisedly to invite certain mischief to his home, and pull down heaviest vengeance on his own head, by opposing the irresistible power, and provoking the inflexible justice of God! What an abominable villany and baseness is it thus to abuse God's immense goodness and mercy, offering such despite to the Author of his being, and free Donor of all the good he enjoys! What a monstrous conspiracy is it of stupidity and perverseness in him, thus wilfully to defy his own welfare, to forfeit all capacity of happiness; to precipitate and plunge himself into a double hell, that of bitter remorse here, that of endless pain hereafter! But if he that reproacheth God and religion be supposed distrustful of their being and reality, neither so is he excusable from like degrees

¹ (Ps. lxxviii. 19; Numb. xxi. 5; Job xxxiv. 37.)

² Ps. lxxiii. 8, 9.

³ Isa. xxxvii. 23; 2 Chron. xxxii. 19; Dan. xi. 36.

⁴ Isa. liv. 17.

of folly and pravity: for, beside the wild extravagance of such disbelief, against legions of cogent arguments and pregnant testimonies, against all the voice of nature and faith of history, against the settled judgment of wise and sober persons, who have studied and considered the point, against the current tradition of all ages, and general consent of mankind; all which to withstand, no less demonstrateth high indiscretion than arrogance; beside also the palpable silliness which he displays, in causelessly (or for no other cause than soothing a fantastic humour) drawing upon himself the anger and hatred of all men who are concerned for the interests of their religion, thrusting himself into great dangers and mischiefs thence imminent to him both from private zeal and public law; beside, I say, these evident follies, there is an insufferable insolence and horrible malice apparent in this practice; for it is no less than the height of insolence, thus to affront mankind in matters of highest consideration, and deepest resentment with it; not only thwarting its common notions, but vilifying the chief objects of its highest respect and affection, of its main care and concernment; so making the fiercest invasion that can be on its credit, and charging it with greatest fondness. Who can endure that he, whom he apprehends to be his grand Parent, his best Friend and Benefactor, his great Patron and Sovereign, should in downright terms be defamed or disparaged? Who can patiently bear that wherein he placeth his utmost hopes and supreme felicity, to be expressly slighted or scorned? Who can take the offering to do this, otherwise than for a most injurious reflection upon his judgment and his practice? If he cannot believe in God, he may let them alone who do: if he will not practise religion, he may forbear to persecute it. He cannot pretend any zeal; it is therefore only pride that moves him to disturb us. So may every man, with all the reason in the world, complain against the profane talker. Seeing also it is most evident, that hearty reverence of God, and a conscientious regard to religion, do produce great benefits to mankind, being indeed the main supports of com-

mon honesty and sobriety, the sole curbs, effectually restraining men from unjust fraud and violence, from brutish lusts and passions; since apparently religion prescribeth the best rules, and imposeth the strongest engagements to the performance of those actions, whereby not only men's private welfare is promoted, and ordinary conversation is sweetened, and common life is adorned, but also whereby public order and peace are maintained; since, as Cicero with good reason judged, *piety being removed, it is probable that justice itself* (of all virtues the best guarded and fortified by human power) *could not subsist, no faith could be secured, no society could be preserved among men*⁵; it being manifestly vain to fancy, that assuredly without religious conscience any one will be a good subject, a true friend, or an honest man; or that any other consideration can induce men to prefer duty to their prince, the prosperity of their country, fidelity toward their friends or neighbours, before their own present interests and pleasure: since, I say, the credit of religion is so very beneficial and useful to mankind, it is plain that he must be exceedingly spiteful and malicious, who shall by profane discourse endeavour to supplant or shake it. He that speaketh against God's providence hath assuredly a pique at goodness, and would not have it predominant in the hearts of men. He that disparages religion doth certainly take his aim against virtue, and would not have it practised in the world: his meaning plainly is, to effect, if he can, that men should live like beasts in foul impurities, or like fiends in mischievous iniquities. Such an one, therefore, is not to be taken as a simple embracer of error, but as a spiteful designer against common good. For indeed, were any man assured (as none can upon so much as probable grounds think it) that religion had been only devised by men, as a supplemental aid to reason and force (drawing them, whom the one could not persuade, nor the other compel, to the practice of

⁵ Haud scio an, pietate adversus Deos sublata, fides etiam, et societas humani generis, et una excellentissima virtus justitia tollatur.—Cic.

things conducive to the public weal⁶); that it were merely an implement of policy, or a knack to make people loyal to their prince, upright in their dealings, sober in their conversations, moderate in their passions, virtuous in all their doings; it were yet a most barbarous naughtiness and inhumanity in him to assay the overthrow thereof, with the defeating so excellent purposes: he that should attempt it, justly would deserve to be reputed an enemy to the welfare of mankind, to be treated as a pestilent disturber of the world.

II. Another like offence against piety is, to speak loosely and wantonly about holy things (things nearly related to God or to religion), to make such things the matter of sport and mockery, to play and trifle with them. But of this I shall have occasion to speak in another discourse.

III. Another grand offence against piety is, rash and vain swearing in common discourse; an offence which now strangely reigns and rages in the world, passing about in a specious garb, and under glorious titles, as a genteel and graceful quality, a mark of fine breeding, and a point of high gallantry. Who, forsooth, now is the brave spark and complete gentleman, but he that hath the skill and confidence (O heavens! how mean a skill! how mad a confidence!) to lard every sentence with an oath or a curse; making bold at every turn to salute God, fetching him down from heaven to avouch any idle prattle, to second any giddy passion, to concern himself in any trivial affair of his; yea, calling and challenging the Almighty to damn and destroy him! But somewhat to repress these fond conceits and vile practices, let us, I pray, consider—

1. That swearing thus is most expressly and strictly prohibited to us. *I say unto you, Swear not at all; but let your conversation be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil*⁷: so our Lord forbids it. *But above all things, my brethren, swear not—lest you enter into condemnation*⁸: so doth St. James

⁶ Ut quos ratio non posset, eos ad officium religio duceret.—Cic.

Matt. v. 34. 37.

⁸ James v. 12.

warn against it. And is it not then prodigious, that in Christendom any man should affect to break laws so plain and so severe; that it should pass here not only for a tolerable, but even for a commendable practice, to violate so manifest and so important a duty; that so directly to thwart our Lord himself should be a thing not in use only, but in credit and request among Christians? What more palpable affront could be offered to our religion, and to all that is sacred among us? For what respect or force can we imagine reserved to religion, while a practice so indisputably opposite thereto, in a high degree, is so current and prevalent?

2. Again, according to the very nature and reason of things, it is evidently an intolerable profaneness, thus unadvisedly to make addresses and appeals to God, invoking his testimony, and demanding his judgment about trifles; far more such, than it were a high presumption and encroachment upon the majesty of a prince, on every petty occasion to break into his presence, and to assail his ears, dragging him to hear and determine concerning it. Whence the very light of nature condemns this practice, and even heathens have loudly declared against it, as derogatory to the reverence of the duty, and unsuitable to the gravity of a worthy man.

3. Swearing indeed is by our holy Oracles worthily represented to us as an especial piece of worship and devotion toward God; wherein, duly performed, we piously acknowledge his chief attributes and singular prerogatives (his being every where present, and conscious of all we say or do; his goodness and fidelity, in favouring truth and protecting right; his justice, in rewarding veracity and equity, in avenging falsehood and iniquity; his being the supreme Lord of all persons, and last judge in all causes; to signify and avow these things to God's glory, swearing was instituted, and naturally serveth): wherefore, as all other acts of devotion, so this grand one especially should never be performed without all serious consideration and humble reverence; the cause should be certainly just and true,

the matter worthy and weighty, the manner grave and solemn, the mind framed to earnest attention, and furnished with devout affections. These conditions are always carefully to be observed, which the prophet intimates when he chargeth thus: *Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness* ⁹. It is therefore horrible mockery and profanation of a most sacred ordinance, when men presume to use it without any care or consideration, without any respect or awe, upon any slight or vain occasion.

4. The doing so is also very prejudicial to human society; for the decision of right, the security of government, and the preservation of peace, do much depend upon an awful regard to oaths; and, therefore, upon their being only used in due manner and season: the same do greatly suffer by the contempt or disregard of them, and consequently by their common and careless use. They are the surest bonds by which the consciences of men are tied to the attestation of truth and observance of faith; the which, as by rare and reverent use they are kept firm and fast, so by frequent and negligent application of them (by their prostitution to every light and toyish matter) they are quite dissolved, or much slackened. Whence the public seems much concerned that this enormity should be retrenched. For if oaths generally become cheap and vile, what will that of allegiance signify? If men are wont to dally with swearing every where, can they be expected to be strict and serious therein at the bar, or in the church? Will they regard the testimony of God, or dread his judgment, in one place, or at one time, when as every where continually (upon any, upon no occasion) they dare to confront and condemn them?

5. This way of swearing is also a very uncivil and unmannerly practice. It is not only a gross rudeness toward the main body of men, who justly reverence the name of God, and loathe such abuses thereof; not only an insolent defiance to the common profession and law

⁹ Jer. iv. 2.

of our country, which disallows and condemns it; but it is very odious and offensive to any particular society, if, at least, there be one sober person therein; for, to any such person (who retains a sense of goodness, or is any wise concerned for God's honour,) no language or behaviour can be more disgustful; nothing can more grate the ears or fret the heart of such an one, than this kind of talk: to give him the lie were a compliment, to spit in his face were an obligation, in comparison thereto. Wherefore it is a wonder that any person having in him a spark of ingenuity, or at all pretending to good manners, should find in his heart or deign to use it.

6. This practice also much derogateth from the credit of him that useth it, rendering the truth of whatever he says in reason and justice suspected. For he that is so void of conscience as to swear vainly, what can engage him to speak truly? He that is so loose in one such point of obedience to God and reason, why should we conceive him strict in regard to another?

7. It can be surely no wrong to distrust him, since he implies himself not to be, even in his own opinion, a credible person; since he judges not his own bare affirmation to deserve belief. For why, if he takes his word to be competently good, doth he back it with such asseverations¹? why unprovoked calls he God to witness, if he thinks his own honesty sufficient to assure the truth of what he says? An honest man, methinks, should scorn thus to invalidate his own credit, or to detract from the authority of his word, which should stand firm upon itself, and not want an oath to support it.

8. To excuse this, the swearer must be forced to confess another ugly fault in speaking, that is, impertinence, or using of waste and insignificant words; to be charged wherewith he is indeed, however, unavoidably liable. For oaths, as they pass commonly, are mere excrescences of speech, which do nothing else but

¹ Tantus in te sit veri amor, ut quicquid dixeris, juratum putes.
—*Hier.*

encumber and deform it; they embellish discourse just as a wen or a scab does beautify a face, as a spot or a patch do adorn a garment. For to what purpose, I pray, is God's name haled into our idle talk? Why should we so often mention him when we never mean any thing about him? Into every sentence to foist a dog or a horse, would altogether be as proper and pertinent. These superfluous words signify nothing, but that the speaker little skilleth the use of speech, or the rule of conversation, but meaneth to prate any thing without wit or judgment²; that his fancy is very beggarly, and craves the aid of any impertinency to relieve it. One would think that a man of sense should grutch to lend his ears, or incline his attention, to such putrid stuff; that without nauseating he should not endure to see men lavish time, and squander breath so frivolously.

9. In fine, this offence is particularly most inexcusable, in that it scarce hath any temptation to it, or bringeth with it any advantage; so that it is unaccountable what (beside mere vanity or perverseness) should dispose men thereto. It gratifieth no sense, it yieldeth no profit, it procureth no honour: for the sound of it is not very melodious, nor surely was any man ever preferred for it, or got an estate thereby; it rather, to any good ear, maketh a horrid and jarring noise; it rather produceth displeasure, damage, and disgrace. Wherefore, of all dealers in sin, the swearer is apparently the silliest, and maketh the worst bargains for himself; for he sinneth gratis, and, like those in the Prophet, *sellet* his soul for nothing³. An epicure hath some reason, and an extortioner is a man of wisdom if compared to him; for they enjoy some pleasure, or acquire some gain here, in lieu of their salvation hereafter. But he offends heaven, and abandons happiness, he knows not why, nor for what; a fond humour possesses him, he inconsiderately follows a herd of fops, he affects to play the ape; that is all he can say for himself. Let me be pardoned, if just indignation against

² Πρὸς ἀναπλήρωσιν λόγου.—Hier.

³ Isa. lii. 3.

a wickedness so contemptible, so heinous, and so senseless, and withal so notorious, and so rife among us, doth extort from me language somewhat tart and vehement.

If men would then but a little consider things, surely this scurvy fashion would be soon discarded, much fitter for the scum of the people than for the flower of the gentry : yea rather, much below any man endued with a scrap of reason, not to say with a grain of religion. Could we bethink ourselves, certainly modest, sober, and pertinent discourse would appear far more generous and manly, than such wild hectoring God Almighty, such rude insulting over the received laws, such ruffianly swaggering against sobriety and goodness. If gentlemen would regard the virtues of their ancestors (that gallant courage, that solid wisdom, that noble courtesy, which first advanced their families, and severed them from the vulgar), this degenerate wantonness and dirtiness of speech would return to the dung-hill, or rather (which God grant) would be quite banished from the world.

Finally, as to this whole point, about not offending in our speech against piety, we should consider, that as we ourselves, with all our members and powers, were chiefly designed and framed to serve and glorify our Maker (it being withal the greatest perfection of our nature, and the noblest privilege thereof so to do) ; so especially our tongue and speaking faculty were given us to declare our admiration and reverence of him, to express our love and gratitude toward him, to celebrate his praises, to acknowledge his benefits, to promote his honour and service. This consequently is the most proper and worthy use thereof ; from this it becomes in effect what the Psalmist so often terms it, our *glory*, and the best member we have ; as that whereby we far excel all creatures here below ; that whereby we consort with the blessed angels above, in distinct utterance of praise to our Creator⁴. Wherefore applying it to any

⁴ Ps. xvi. 19 ; xxx. 12 ; lvii. 8 ; cviii. 1.

impious discourse (tending anywise to the dishonour of God, or disparagement of religion) is a most unnatural abuse thereof, and a vile ingratitude toward him that gave it to us. From which, and from all other offences, God in his mercy preserve us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord; unto whom for ever, with heart and tongue, let us strive to render all glory and praise. *Amen.*

SERMON IV.

THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

PROV. x. 18.

“He that uttereth slander is a fool.”

GENERAL declamations against vice and sin are indeed excellently useful, as rousing men to consider and look about them: but they do often want effect, because they only raise confused apprehensions of things, and indeterminate propensions to action; the which usually, before men thoroughly perceive or resolve what they should practise, do decay and vanish. As he that cries out “Fire!” doth stir up people, and inspireth them with a kind of hovering tendency every way, yet no man thence to purpose moveth, until he be distinctly informed where the mischief is; then do they, who apprehend themselves concerned, run hastily to oppose it: so, till we particularly discern where our offences lie (till we distinctly know the heinous nature and the mischievous consequences of them), we scarce will effectually apply ourselves to correct them. Whence it is requisite, that men should be particularly acquainted with their sins, and by proper arguments be dissuaded from them.

In order whereto I have now selected one sin to describe, and to dissuade from, being in nature as vile, and in practice as common, as any other whatever that

hath prevailed among men. It is Slander, a sin which in all times and places hath been epidemical and rife; but which especially doth seem to reign and rage in our age and country.

There are principles innate to men, which ever have, and ever will incline them to this offence. Eager appetites to secular and sensual goods; violent passions, urging the prosecution of what men affect; wrath and displeasure against those who stand in the way of compassing their desires; emulation and envy toward those who hap to succeed better, or to attain a greater share in such things; excessive self-love; unaccountable malignity and vanity, are in some degrees connatural to all men, and ever prompt them to this dealing, as appearing the most efficacious, compendious, and easy way of satisfying such appetites, of promoting such designs, of discharging such passions. Slander thence hath always been a principal engine whereby covetous, ambitious, envious, ill-natured, and vain persons have strove to supplant their competitors, and advance themselves; meaning thereby to procure, what they chiefly prize and like, wealth, or dignity, or reputation, favour and power in the court, respect and interest with the people.

But from especial causes our age peculiarly doth abound in this practice; for, besides the common dispositions, inclining thereto, there are conceits newly coined, and greedily entertained by many, which seem purposely levelled at the disparagement of piety, charity, and justice, substituting interest in the room of conscience, authorizing and commending, for good and wise, all ways serving to private advantage. There are implacable dissensions, fierce animosities, and bitter zeals sprung up; there is an extreme curiosity, niceness, and delicacy of judgment; there is a mighty affectation of seeming wise and witty by any means; there is a great unsettlement of mind, and corruption of manners, generally diffused over people: from which sources it is no wonder that this flood hath so overflowed, that no banks can restrain it, no fences are able to resist it; so

that ordinary conversation is full with it, and no demeanour can be secure from it.

If we do mark what is done in many (might I not say, in most?) companies, what is it, but one telling malicious stories of, or fastening odious characters upon another? What do men commonly please themselves in so much, as in carping and harshly censuring, in defaming and abusing their neighbours? Is it not the sport and divertisement of many, to cast dirt in the faces of all they meet with; to bespatter any man with foul imputations? Doth not in every corner a Momus lurk, from the venom of whose spiteful or petulant tongue no eminency of rank, dignity of place, or sacredness of office, no innocence or integrity of life, no wisdom or circumspection in behaviour, no good nature, or benignity in dealing and carriage, can protect any person? Do not men assume to themselves a liberty of telling romances, and framing characters concerning their neighbour, as freely as a poet doth about Hector or Turnus, Thersites or Draucus? Do they not usurp a power of playing with, of tossing about, of tearing in pieces their neighbour's good name, as if it were the veriest toy in the world? Do not many, *having a form of godliness* (some of them demurely, others confidently, both without any sense of, or remorse for, what they do), backbite their brethren? Is it not grown so common a thing to asperse causelessly, that no man wonders at it, that few dislike, that scarce any detest it? that most notorious calumniators are heard, not only with patience, but with pleasure; yea, are even held in vogue and reverence, as men of a notable talent, and very serviceable to their party? so that Slander seemeth to have lost its nature, and not to be now an odious sin, but a fashionable humour, a way of pleasing entertainment, a fine knack, or curious feat of policy; so that no man at least taketh himself or others to be accountable for what is said in this way? Is not, in fine, the case become such, that whoever hath in him any love of truth, any sense of justice or honesty, any spark of charity toward his brethren, shall hardly

be able to satisfy himself in the conversations he meeteth; but will be tempted, with the holy Prophet, to wish himself sequestered from society, and cast into solitude; repeating those words of his, *Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them: for they are—an assembly of treacherous men, and they bend their tongues like their bow for lies*¹? This he wished in an age so resembling ours, that I fear the description with equal patness may suit both: *Take ye heed* (said he then; and may we not advise the like now?) *every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. They will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity*².

Such being the state of things obvious to experience, no discourse may seem more needful or useful, than that which serveth to correct or check this practice: the which I shall endeavour to do,—1. by describing the nature; 2. by declaring the folly of it: or showing it to be very true which the Wise Man here asserteth, *He that uttereth slander is a fool*. The which particulars I hope so to prosecute, that any man shall be able easily to discern, and ready heartily to detest this practice.

I. For explication of its nature, we may describe Slander to be the uttering false (or equivalent to false, morally false) speech against our neighbour, in prejudice to his fame, his safety, his welfare, or concernment in any kind, out of malignity, vanity, rashness, ill nature, or bad design. That which is in holy Scripture forbidden and reprov'd under several names and notions; of *bearing false witness, false accusation, railing censure, sycophantry, tale-bearing, whispering, backbiting, supplanting, taking up reproach*³: which terms some of

¹ Jer. ix. 2, 3; vi. 18; Ezek. xxii. 9.

² Jer. ix. 4, 5.

³ Exod. xx. 16; Ps. xxxv. 11; Jude 9; 2 Pet. ii. 11; Luke

them do signify the nature, others denote the special kinds, others imply the manners, others suggest the ends of this practice. But it seemeth most fully intelligible by observing the several kinds and degrees thereof; as also by reflecting on the divers ways and manners of practising it.

The principal kinds thereof I observe to be these:—

1. The grossest kind of slander is that which in the Decalogue is called *bearing false testimony against our neighbour*; that is, flatly charging him with facts the which he never committed, and is nowise guilty of. As in the case of Naboth, when men were suborned to say, *Naboth did blaspheme God and the king*: and as was David's case when he thus complained, *False witnesses did rise up, they laid to my charge things that I knew not of*⁴. This kind in the highest way (that is, in judicial proceedings) is more rare; and of all men, they who are detected to practise it are held most vile and infamous; as being plainly the most pernicious and perilous instruments of injustice, the most desperate enemies of all men's right and safety that can be. But also out of the court there are many knights-errant of the post, whose business it is to run about scattering false reports; sometimes loudly proclaiming them in open companies, sometimes closely whispering them in dark corners; thus infecting conversation with their poisonous breath: these no less notoriously are guilty of this kind, as bearing always the same malice, and sometimes breeding as ill effects.

2. Another kind is, affixing scandalous names, injurious epithets, and odious characters upon persons, which they deserve not. As when Corah and his complices did accuse Moses of being ambitious, unjust, and tyrannical: when the Pharisees called our Lord an impostor, a blasphemmer, a sorcerer, a glutton and wine-

iii. 14; xix. 8; Levit. xix. 16; Prov. xviii. 8; xxvi. 20; xvi. 28; Rom. i. 29; 2 Cor. xii. 20; Ps. xv. 3; Rom. i. 30; Jer. ix. 4; Ps. xv. 3.

⁴ 1 Kings xxi. 13; Ps. xxxv. 11.

bibber, an incendiary and perverter of the people, one that *spake against Cæsar*, and *forbade to give tribute*: when the apostles were charged of being pestilent, turbulent, factious, and seditious fellows⁵. This sort being very common, and thence in ordinary repute not so bad, yet in just estimation may be judged even worse than the former; as doing to our neighbour more heavy and more irreparable wrong. For it imposeth on him really more blame, and that such which he can hardly shake off: because the charge signifieth habit of evil, and includeth many acts; then, being general and indefinite, can scarce be disproved. He, for instance, that calleth a sober man drunkard, doth impute to him many acts of such intemperance; some really past, others probably future; and no particular time or place being specified, how can a man clear himself of that imputation, especially with those who are not thoroughly acquainted with his conversation? So he that calleth a man unjust, proud, perverse, hypocritical, doth load him with the most grievous faults, which it is not possible that the most innocent person should discharge himself from.

3. Like to that kind is this, aspersing a man's actions with harsh censures and foul terms, importing that they proceed from ill principles, or tend to bad ends; so as it doth not or cannot appear. Thus when we say of him that is generously hospitable, that he is profuse; of him that is prudently frugal, that he is niggardly; of him that is cheerful and free in his conversation, that he is vain or loose; of him that is serious and resolute in a good way, that he is sullen or morose; of him that is conspicuous and brisk in virtuous practice, that it is ambition or ostentation which actuates him; of him that is close and bashful in the like good way, that it is sneaking stupidity, or want of spirit; of him that is reserved, that it is craft; of him that is open, that it

⁵ Numb. xvi. 3. 13, 14; John xix. 7. 21; Matt. xxvi. 65; ix. 3; xii. 24; xi. 19; Luke xxiii. 2. 5. 14; John xix. 12; Acts xvii. 6; xxiv. 5.

is simplicity in him⁶: when we ascribe a man's liberality and charity to vain-glory or popularity; his strictness of life and constancy in devotion, to superstition or hypocrisy: when, I say, we pass such censures, or impose such characters, on the laudable or innocent practice of our neighbours, we are indeed slanderers, imitating therein the great calumniator, who thus did slander even God Himself, imputing his prohibition of the fruit unto envy toward men: (*God, said he, doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil*⁷;) who thus did ascribe the steady piety of Job, not to a conscientious love and fear of God, but to policy and selfish design: *Doth Job fear God for nought*⁸?

Whoever indeed pronounceth concerning his neighbour's intentions otherwise than they are evidently expressed by words, or signified by overt actions, is a slanderer; because he pretendeth to know, and dareth to aver, that which he no ways possibly can tell whether it be true; because the heart is exempt from all jurisdiction here, is only subject to the government and trial of another world; because no man can judge concerning the truth of such accusations; because no man can exempt or defend himself from them: so that apparently such practice doth thwart all course of justice and equity.

4. Another kind is, perverting a man's words or actions disadvantageously by affected misconstruction⁹. All words are ambiguous, and capable of different senses (some fair, some more foul); all actions have two handles, one that candour and charity will, another that disingenuity and spite may lay hold on¹: and in such cases, to misapprehend is a calumnious proce-

⁶ At nos virtutes ipsas invertimus, atque Sincerum cupimus vas incrustare. Probus quis Nobiscum vivit? multum est demissus homo. Illi Tardo cognomen pinguis damus, &c.

Hor. Serm. i. 3. Vid. Sidon. Apoll.

⁷ Gen. iii. 5.

⁸ Job i. 9; ii. 4.

⁹ Jer. xxiii. 36.

¹ Πᾶν πρᾶγμα ἔχει δύο λαβὰς.—*Epict.*

dure, arguing malignant disposition and mischievous design. Thus, when two men did witness that our Lord affirmed He *could demolish the temple, and rear it again in three days*²; although He did indeed speak words to that purpose, meaning them in a figurative sense, discernible enough to those who would candidly have minded his drift and way of speaking; yet they who crudely alleged them against Him are called false witnesses. *At last* (saith the Gospel) *came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple, &c.*³ Thus also, when some certified of St. Stephen, as having said that *Jesus of Nazareth should destroy that place, and change the customs that Moses delivered*; although probably He did speak words near to that purpose, yet are those men called false witnesses: *And* (saith St. Luke) *they set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words, &c.* Which instances plainly do show, if we would avoid the guilt of slander, how careful we should be to interpret fairly and favourably the words and the actions of our neighbour.

5. Another sort of this practice is, partial and lame representation of men's discourse, or their practice; suppressing some part of the truth in them, or concealing some circumstances about them, which might serve to explain, to excuse, or to extenuate them. In such a manner easily, without uttering any logical untruth, one may yet grievously calumniate. Thus, suppose that a man speaketh a thing upon supposition, or with exception, or in any way of objection, or merely for disputation sake, in order to the discussion or clearing of truth; he that should report him asserting it absolutely, unlimitedly, positively, and peremptorily as his own settled judgment, would notoriously calumniate. If one should be inveigled by fraud, or driven by violence, or slip by chance into a bad place, or bad com-

² Matt. xxvi. 60, 61; John ii. 19.

³ Ps. lvi. 5.—“Every day they wrest my words.” Matt. ubi *supra*; Acts vi. 13, 14.

pany; he that should so represent the gross of that accident as to breed an opinion of that person, that out of pure disposition and design he did put himself there, doth slanderously abuse that innocent person. The reporter in such cases must not think to defend himself by pretending that he spake nothing false; for such propositions, however true in logic, may justly be deemed lies in morality, being uttered with a malicious and deceitful (that is, with a calumnious) mind, being apt to impress false conceits, and to produce hurtful effects concerning our neighbour. There are slanderous truths, as well as slanderous falsehoods: when truth is uttered with a deceitful heart, and to a base end, it becomes a lie. *He that speaketh truth* (saith the wise man) *showeth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit*⁴. Deceiving is the proper work of slander; and truth abused to that end putteth on its nature, and will engage into like guilt.

6. Another kind of calumny is, by instilling sly suggestions; which although they do not downrightly assert falsehoods, yet they breed sinister opinions in the hearers⁵; especially in those who from weakness or credulity, from jealousy or prejudice, from negligence or inadvertency, are prone to entertain them. This is done many ways; by propounding wily suppositions, shrewd insinuations, crafty questions, and specious comparisons, intimating a possibility, or inferring some likelihood of, and thence inducing to believe the fact. Doth not, saith this kind of slanderer, his temper incline him to do thus? may not his interest have swayed him thereto? had he not fair opportunity and strong temptation to it? hath he not acted so in like cases? judge you therefore whether he did it not. Thus the close slanderer argueth; and a weak or prejudiced person is thereby so caught, that he presently is ready thence to conclude the thing done. Again, he doeth well, saith

⁴ Prov. xii. 17.

⁵ Vid. *Herm. Pastor*. Where the Pastor observes, "that the devil doth in his temptations intersperse some truths, serving to render his delusions passable."

the sycophant, it is true; but why, and to what end? Is it not, as most men do, out of ill design? may he not dissemble now? may he not recoil hereafter? have not others made as fair a show? yet we know what came of it. Thus do calumnious tongues pervert the judgments of men to think ill of the most innocent, and meanly of the worthiest actions. Even commendation itself is often used calumniously, with intent to breed dislike and ill-will toward a person commended in envious or jealous ears; or so as to give passage to dispraises, and render the accusations following more credible. It is an artifice commonly observed to be much in use there, where the finest tricks of supplanting are practised with greatest effect; so that, *pessimum inimicorum genus, laudantes*; there is no more pestilent enemy, than a malevolent praiser⁶. All these kinds of dealing, as they issue from the principles of slander, and perform its work, so they deservedly bear the guilt thereof.

7. A like kind is that of oblique and covert reflections; when a man doth not directly or expressly charge his neighbour with faults, but yet so speaketh, that he is understood, or reasonably presumed to do it. This is a very cunning and very mischievous way of slandering; for therein the sculking calumniator keepeth a reserve for himself, and cutteth off from the person concerned the means of defence. If he goeth to clear himself from the matter of such aspersions; What need, saith this insidious speaker, of that? must I needs mean you? did I name you? why do you then assume it to yourself? do you not prejudge yourself guilty? I did not, but your own conscience, it seemeth, doth accuse you. You are so jealous and suspicious, as persons over wise or guilty use to be. So meaneth this serpent out of the hedge securely and unavoidably to bite his neighbour; and is in that

⁶ Excusando exprobraret.—*Tac. Ann.* i. p. 10.

Καίνος τις εὔρηται τρόπος οὗτος τῆς διαβολῆς, τὸ μὴ ψέγοντας, ἀλλ' ἐπαινοῦντας λυμαίνεσθαι τοὺς πέλας.—*Polyb. lib. iv.*

respect more base and more hurtful than the most flat and positive slanderer.

8. Another kind is that of magnifying and aggravating the faults of others; raising any small miscarriage into a heinous crime, any slender defect into an odious vice, and any common infirmity into a strange enormity; turning a small *mote in the eye* of our neighbour into a huge *beam*⁷, a little dimple in his face into a monstrous wen. This is plainly slander, at least in degree, and according to the surplusage whereby the censure doth exceed the fault. As he that, upon the score of a small debt, doth extort a great sum, is no less a thief, in regard to what amounts beyond his due, than if without any pretence he had violently or fraudulently seized on it; so is he a slanderer, that, by heightening faults or imperfections, doth charge his neighbour with greater blame, or loads him with more disgrace than he deserves. It is not only slander to pick a hole where there is none, but to make that wider which is so; that it appeareth more ugly, and cannot so easily be mended. For charity is wont to extenuate faults; justice doth never exaggerate them. As no man is exempt from some defects, or can live free from some misdemeanours; so by this practice every man may be rendered very odious and infamous.

9. Another kind of slander is, imputing to our neighbour's practice, judgment, or profession, evil consequences (apt to render him odious, or despicable,) which have no dependence on them, or connexion with them. There do in every age occur disorders and mishaps, springing from various complications of causes, working some of them in a more open and discernible, others in a more secret and subtile way (especially from Divine judgment and providence checking or chastising sin): from such occurrences it is common to snatch occasion and matter of calumny. Those who are disposed this way are ready peremptorily to charge them upon whom-ever they dislike or dissent from, although without any

⁷ Matt. vii. 3.

apparent cause, or upon most frivolous and senseless pretences; yea, often, when reason showeth the quite contrary, and they who are so charged are in just esteem of all men the least obnoxious to such accusations. So usually the best friends of mankind, those who most heartily wish the peace and prosperity of the world, and most earnestly to their power strive to promote them, have all the disturbances and disasters happening charged on them by those fiery *vixons*, who (in pursuance of their base designs, or gratification of their wild passions) really do themselves embroil things, and raise miserable combustions in the world. So it is, that they who have the conscience to do mischief, will have the confidence also to disavow the blame and the iniquity, to lay the burden of it on those who are most innocent. Thus, whereas nothing more disposeth men to live orderly and peaceably, nothing more conduceth to the settlement and safety of the public, nothing so much draweth blessings down from heaven upon the commonweal, as true religion; yet nothing hath been more ordinary, than to attribute all the miscarriages and mischiefs that happened unto it; even those are laid at its door, which plainly do arise from the contempt or neglect of it; being the natural fruits or the just punishments of irreligion. King Ahab, by *forsaking God's commandments* and following wicked superstitions, had *troubled Israel*, drawing sore judgments and calamities thereon; yet had he the heart and the face to charge those events on the great assertor of piety, Elias; *Art thou he that troubleth Israel*⁸? The Jews by provocation of Divine justice had set themselves in a fair way toward desolation and ruin; this event to come they had the presumption to lay upon the faith of our Lord's doctrine; *If (said they) we let him alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come, and take away our place and nation*⁹: when as, in truth, a compliance with his directions and admonitions had been the only means to prevent those pre-

⁸ 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18.

⁹ John xi. 48.

saged mischiefs. And, *Si Tiberis ascenderit in mœnia*, if any public calamity did appear, then *Christianos ad leones*¹, Christians must be charged and persecuted as the causes thereof. To them it was that Julian and other pagans did impute all the concussions, confusions, and devastations falling upon the Roman empire. The sacking of Rome by the Goths they cast upon Christianity²: for the vindication of it from which reproach, St. Austin did write those renowned books *de Civitate Dei*. So liable are the best and most innocent sort of men to be calumniously accused in this manner.

Another practice (worthily bearing the guilt of slander) is, being aiding and accessory thereto, by anywise furthering, cherishing, abetting it³. He that by crafty significations of ill-will doth prompt the slanderer to vent his poison; he that by a willing audience and attention doth readily suck it up, or who greedily swalloweth it down by credulous approbation and assent; he that pleasingly relisheth and smacketh at it, or expresseth a delightful complacence therein; as he is a partner in the fact, so he is a sharer in the guilt⁴. There are not only slanderous throats, but slanderous ears also; not only wicked inventions, which engender and brood lies, but wicked assents, which hatch and foster them. Not only the spiteful mother which conceiveth such spurious brats, but the midwife that helpeth to bring them forth, the nurse that feedeth them, the guardian that traineth them up to maturity,

¹ Tertull. Apol.

² Christianis temporibus detrahunt, et mala, quæ illa civitas per tulit, Christo imputant.—*De Civ. Dei*, i. 1; iii. 31. They (saith that great father) detract from the Christian times, and impute the evils, which that city suffered, unto Christ.

³ τὸ ἐνπρόσδεκτον τῆς διαβολῆς.—M. Ant.

⁴ David, Ps. ci. 5.—“Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off:” τοῦτον ἐξέδιωκον, “him have I driven away,” say the LXX.

Neque vero illa justa est excusatio, Referentibus aliis injurias facere non possum. Nemo invito auditori libenter refert. Sagitta in lapidem nunquam figitur; interdum resiliens percutit dirigentem. Discat detractor, dum te videt non libenter audire, non facile detrare.—*Hier. ad Nepot. Ep. ii.*

and setteth them forth to live in the world; as they do really contribute to their subsistence, so deservedly they partake in the blame due to them, and must be responsible for the mischief they do. For indeed, were it not for such free entertainers, such nourishers, such encouragers of them, slanders would commonly die in the womb, or prove still-born, or presently entering into the cold air would expire, or for want of nourishment soon would starve. It is such friends and patrons of them who are the causes that they are so rife; they it is who set ill-natured, base, and designing people upon devising, searching after, and picking up malicious and idle stories. Were it not for such customers, the trade of calumniating would fall⁵. Many pursue it merely out of servility and flattery, to tickle the ears, to soothe the humour, to gratify the malignant disposition or ill-will of others; who upon the least discouragement would give over the practice. If, therefore, we would exempt ourselves from all guilt of slander, we must not only abstain from venting it, but forbear to regard or countenance it⁶: for *He is* (saith the Wise Man) *a wicked doer, who giveth heed to false lips; and a liar, who giveth ear to a naughty tongue*⁷. Yea, if we thoroughly would be clear from it, we must show an aversion from hearing it; an unwillingness to believe it; an indignation against it; so either stifling it in the birth, or condemning it to death being uttered⁸. This is the sure way to destroy it, and to prevent its

⁵ Posidonius relateth of St. Austin, that he had upon his table written these two verses:

Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam,

Hanc mensam indignam noverit esse sibi:

(He that loveth by ill speech to gnaw the life of those who are absent, let him know himself unworthy to sit at this table; or, that this table is unfit for him :) And if any there did use detraction, he was offended, and minded them of those verses, threatening also to leave the table, and withdraw to his chamber.—*Posid.* cap. 22.

⁶ Οὐ παραδέξῃ ἀκοὴν ματαιάν, "Thou shalt not receive (or, take up) a false report," saith the Law.—*Exod.* xxiii. 1.

⁷ Prov. xvii. 4.

⁸ Beatus est, qui ita se contra hoc vitium armavit, ut apud eum detrahere nemo audeat.—*Hier. ad Celantiam.*

mischief. If we would stop our ears, we should stop the slanderer's mouth: if we would *resist the calumniator, he would fly from us*⁹: if we would reprove him, we should repel him. For, as *the north wind driveth away rain*¹, so (the Wise Man telleth us) *doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue*.

These are the chief and most common kinds of slander; and there are several ways of practising them worthy our observing, that we may avoid them; namely these:—

1. The most notoriously heinous way is, forging, and immediately venting ill stories. As it is said of Doeg, *Thy tongue deviseth mischief*: and of another like companion, *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit*⁴: and as our Lord saith of the devil, *When he speaketh a lie, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it*⁵. This palpably is the supreme pitch of calumny, incapable of any qualification or excuse: hell cannot go beyond this; the cursed fiend himself cannot worse employ his wit, than in minting wrongful falsehoods.

2. Another way is, receiving from others, and venting such stories, which they who do it certainly know, or may reasonably presume to be false; the becoming hucksters of counterfeit wares, or factors in this vile trade. There is no false coiner, who hath not some complices and emissaries ready to take from his hand, and put off his money: and such slanderers at second hand are scarce less guilty than the first authors. He that breweth lies may have more wit and skill; but the broacher showeth the like malice and wickedness. In this there is no great difference between the great

⁹ "Hedge thy ears with thorns," &c., Ecclus. xxviii. 24; ita legit Cypr. Ep. 55.

¹ Προν. xxv. 23.—*Αν μάθωσιν οἱ κακῆγοροι ὅτι τῶν διαβαλλομένων μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς αὐτοὺς ἀποστρεφόμεθα, παύσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ τότε τῆς πονηρᾶς ταύτης συνηθείας, καὶ διορθώσονται τὸ ἁμάρτημα, καὶ ἐπαινέσονται μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς, ὡς σωτῆρας αὐτῶν γενομένους, καὶ ἐνεργέτας ἀνακηρύξουσιν.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. γ'.

⁴ Ps. lii. 2; l. 19.

⁵ John viii. 44; (Isa. xxxii. 7.)

devil, that frameth scandalous reports, and the little imps, that run about and disperse them.

3. Another way is, when one without competent examination, due weighing, and just reason, doth admit and spread tales prejudicial to his neighbour's welfare; relying for his warrant (as to the truth of them) upon any slight or slender authority. This is a very common and current practice: men presume it lawful enough to say over whatever they hear; to report any thing, if they can quote an author for it⁴. It is not, say they, my invention; I tell it as I heard it: *sit fides penes authorem*; let him that informed me undergo the blame, if it prove false. So do they conceive themselves excusable for being the instruments of injurious disgrace and damage to their neighbours. But they greatly mistake therein; for as this practice commonly doth arise from the same wicked principles, at least in some degree, and produceth altogether the like mischievous effects, as the wilful devising and conveying slander: so it no less thwarteth the rules of duty, and laws of equity; God hath prohibited it, and reason doth condemn it. *Thou shalt not* (saith God in the Law) *go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people*⁵: as a tale-bearer, (as *Rachil*, that is) as a merchant or trader in ill reports and stories concerning our neighbour, to his prejudice. Not only the framing them, but the dealing in them beyond reason or necessity, is interdicted. And it is part of a good man's character, in the fifteenth Psalm, *Non accepit opprobrium, He taketh not up a reproach against his neighbour*⁶; that is, he doth not easily entertain it, much less doth he effectually propagate it: and in our text, *He* (it is said) *that uttereth slander* (not only he that conceiveth it) *is a fool*.

And in reason, before exact trial and cognizance, to meddle with the fame and interest of another, is evidently a practice full of iniquity, such as no man can

⁴ Τί διαπορθεύεις τὸν λόγον; &c.—Chrys. in Heb. xi. 3. Δίον συσκιάζειν καὶ συγκρύπτειν τὰ ἐλαττώματα τῶν πλησίων, σὺ δὲ ἐκπομπεύεις &c.—Ibid.

⁵ Levit. xix. 16; Prov. xviii. 8; xxvi. 22.

⁶ Ps. xv. 3.

allow in his own case, or brook being used toward himself, without judging himself to be extremely abused by such reporters. In all reason and equity (yea in all discretion), before we yield credence to any report concerning our neighbour, or adventure to relate it, many things are carefully to be weighed and scanned. We should, concerning our author, consider whether he be not a particular enemy, or disaffected to him; whether he be not ill-humoured, or a delighter in telling bad stories; whether he be not dishonest, or unregardful of justice in his dealings and discourse; whether he be not vain, or careless of what he saith; whether he be not light and credulous, or apt to be imposed upon by any small appearance; whether, at least in the present case, he be not negligent, or too forward and rash in speaking. We should also, concerning the matter reported, mind whether it be possible or probable; whether suitable to the disposition of our neighbour, to his principles, to the constant tenor of his practice; whether the action imputed to him be not liable to misapprehension, or his words to misconstruction. All reason and equity do, I say, exact from us, diligently to consider such things, before we do either embrace ourselves, or transmit unto others, any story concerning our neighbour; lest unadvisedly we do him irreparable wrong and mischief. Briefly, we should take his case for our own, and consider whether we ourselves should be content, that upon like grounds or testimonies any man should believe or report disgraceful things concerning us. If we fail to do thus, we do (vainly, or rashly, or maliciously) conspire with the slanderer to the wrong of our innocent neighbour; and that in the Psalmist (by a parity of reason) may be transferred to us: *Thou hast consented unto the liar, and hast partaken with the author of calumny*⁷.

4. Of kin to this way is the assenting to popular rumours, and thence affirming matters of obloquy to our neighbour. Every one by experience knows how easily false news do rise, and how nimbly they scatter them-

⁷ Ps. l. 18.

selves; how often they are raised from nothing; how soon they from small sparks grow into a great blaze; how easily from one thing they are transformed into another: especially news of this kind, which do suit and feed the bad humour of the vulgar. It is obvious to any man how true that is of Tacitus, how void of consideration, of judgment, of equity, the busy and talking part of mankind is⁸. Whoever therefore gives heed to flying tales, and thrusts himself into the herd of those who spread them, is either strangely injudicious, or very malignantly disposed. If he want not judgment, he cannot but know, that when he complieth with popular fame, it is mere chance that he doth not slander, or rather it is odds that he shall do so: he consequently sheweth himself to be indifferent whether he doth it or no, or rather that he doth incline to do it: whence, not caring to be otherwise, or loving to be a slanderer, he in effect and just esteem is such; having at least a slanderous heart and inclination. He that puts it to the venture whether he lieth or no, doth *eo ipso* lie morally, as declaring no care or love of truth. *Thou shalt not* (saith the Law) *follow a multitude to do evil*⁹: and with like reason we should not follow the multitude in speaking evil of our neighbour.

5. Another slanderous course is, to build censures and reproaches upon slender conjectures, or uncertain suspicions, (those *ὑπόνοιαι πονηραὶ*, *evil surmises*, which St. Paul condemneth¹.) Of these occasion can never be wanting to them who seek them, or are ready to embrace them; no innocence, no wisdom, can anywise prevent them: and if they may be admitted as grounds of defamation, no man's good name can be secure. But he that upon such accounts dareth to asperse his neighbour is in moral computation no less a slanderer, than

⁸ Plebi non judicium, non veritas.—*Tac. Ann.* xvi.

Non est consilium in vulgo, non ratio, non discrimen, non diligentia—ex opinione plurima, ex veritate pauca judicat.—*Cic. pro Plancio*.

Δαψὲ μὴ πιστεύετε· πολύτροπός ἐστιν ὁμιλος.—*Phocyl.*

Prov. xiv. 15.—“The simple believeth every word.”

⁹ Exod. xxiii. 2.

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 4; Matt. ix. 4.

if he did the like out of pure invention, or without any ground at all²: for doubtful and false in this case differ little; to devise, and to divine, in matters of this nature, do import near the same. He that will judge or speak ill of others, ought to be well assured of what he thinks or says: he that asserteth that which he doth not know to be true, doth as well lie, as he that affirmeth that which he knoweth to be false (for he deceiveth the hearers, begetting in them an opinion that he is assured of what he affirms); especially in dealing with the concernments of others, whose right and repute justice doth oblige us to beware of infringing, charity should dispose us to regard and tender as our own. It is not every possibility, every seeming, every faint show or glimmering appearance, which sufficeth to ground bad opinion or reproachful discourse concerning our brother: the matter should be clear, notorious, and palpable, before we admit a disadvantageous conceit into our head, a distasteful resentment into our heart, a harsh word into our mouth about him. Men may fancy themselves sagacious and shrewd (persons of deep judgment and fine wit they may be taken for), when they can dive into others' hearts, and sound their intentions; when through thick mists or at remote distances they can descry faults in them; when they collect ill of them by long trains, and subtle fetches of discourse: but in truth they do thereby rather bewray in themselves small love of truth, care of justice, or sense of charity, together with little wisdom and discretion: for truth is only seen in a clear light; justice requireth strict proof; *charity thinketh no evil*, and *believeth all things*³ for the best; wisdom is not forward to pronounce before full evidence. (*He, saith the Wise Man, that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him*⁴.) In fine, they who proceed thus, as it is usual that they speak falsely, as it is casual that they ever speak truly, as they affect to speak ill, true or false; so worthily they are to be reckoned among slanderers.

² Ziba. 2 Sam. xvi. 3; xix. 27.

³ 1 Cor. xiii. 5. 7.

⁴ Prov. xviii. 13.

ture, arguing malignant disposition and mischievous design. Thus, when two men did witness that our Lord affirmed He *could demolish the temple, and rear it again in three days*²; although He did indeed speak words to that purpose, meaning them in a figurative sense, discernible enough to those who would candidly have minded his drift and way of speaking; yet they who crudely alleged them against Him are called false witnesses. *At last* (saith the Gospel) *came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple, &c.*³ Thus also, when some certified of St. Stephen, as having said that *Jesus of Nazareth should destroy that place, and change the customs that Moses delivered*; although probably He did speak words near to that purpose, yet are those men called false witnesses: *And* (saith St. Luke) *they set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words, &c.* Which instances plainly do show, if we would avoid the guilt of slander, how careful we should be to interpret fairly and favourably the words and the actions of our neighbour.

5. Another sort of this practice is, partial and lame representation of men's discourse, or their practice; suppressing some part of the truth in them, or concealing some circumstances about them, which might serve to explain, to excuse, or to extenuate them. In such a manner easily, without uttering any logical untruth, one may yet grievously calumniate. Thus, suppose that a man speaketh a thing upon supposition, or with exception, or in any way of objection, or merely for disputation sake, in order to the discussion or clearing of truth; he that should report him asserting it absolutely, unlimitedly, positively, and peremptorily as his own settled judgment, would notoriously calumniate. If one should be inveigled by fraud, or driven by violence, or slip by chance into a bad place, or bad com-

² Matt. xxvi. 60, 61; John ii. 19.

³ Ps. lvi. 5.—“Every day they wrest my words.” Matt. *ubi supra*; Acts vi. 13, 14.

of desperate reprobates in wickedness, who, having prostituted their consciences to vice, for their own defence and solace would shroud themselves from blame under the shelter of common pravity and infirmity; accusing all men of that whereof they know themselves guilty⁶. But surely there can be no greater iniquity than this, that one man should undergo blame for the ill conscience of another.

These seem to be the chief kinds of slander, and most common ways of practising it. In which description the folly thereof doth, I suppose, so clearly shine, that no man can look thereon without loathing and despising it, as not only a very ugly, but a most foolish practice. No man surely can be wise, who will suffer himself to be defiled therewith. But to render its folly more apparent, we shall display it; declaring it to be extremely foolish upon several accounts. But the doing this, in regard to your patience, we shall forbear at present.

⁶ *Remedium pœnæ suæ arbitrantur, si nemo sit sanctus, si omnibus detrahatur, si turba sit pereuntium, &c.—Hier. ad Asellam, Ep. xcix.*

SERMON V.

THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

PROV. x. 18.

“ He that uttereth a slander is a fool.”

I HAVE formerly in this place, discoursing upon this text, explained the nature of the sin here condemned, with its several kinds, and ways of practising.

II. I shall now proceed to declare the folly of it; and to make good by divers reasons the assertion of the Wise Man, that *he who uttereth slander is a fool*.

1. Slandering is foolish, as sinful and wicked.

All sin is foolish upon many accounts; as proceeding from ignorance, error, inconsiderateness, vanity; as implying weak judgment and irrational choice; as thwarting the dictates of reason and best rules of wisdom; as producing very mischievous effects to ourselves, bereaving us of the chief goods, and exposing us to the worst evils. What can be more egregiously absurd, than to dissent in our opinion and discord in our choice from infinite wisdom; to provoke by our actions sovereign justice and immutable severity; to oppose almighty power, and offend immense goodness; to render ourselves unlike, and contrary in our doings, our disposition, our state, to absolute perfection and felicity? What can be more desperately wild, than to disoblige our best friend, to forfeit his love and favour, to render Him our enemy who is our Lord and our Judge, upon whose

mere will and disposal all our subsistence, all our welfare, does absolutely depend? What greater madness can be conceived than to deprive our minds of all true content here, and to separate our souls from eternal bliss hereafter; to gall our consciences now with sore remorse, and to engage ourselves for ever in remediless miseries? Such folly doth all sin include: whence, in Scripture style, worthily goodness and wisdom are terms equivalent; sin and folly do signify the same thing.

If thence this practice be proved extremely sinful, it will thence sufficiently be demonstrated no less foolish. And that it is extremely sinful, may easily be showed. It is the character of the superlatively wicked man; *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit; thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son*¹. It is indeed plainly the blackest and most hellish sin that can be; that which giveth the grand fiend his names, and most expresseth his nature. He is ὁ Διάβολος, *the slanderer; Satan, the spiteful adversary; the old snake, or dragon*, hissing out lies, and spitting forth venom of calumnious accusation; *the accuser of the brethren*, a murderous, envious, malicious calumniator; *the father of lies*; the grand defamer of God to man, of man to God, of one man to another². And highly wicked surely must that practice be, whereby we grow namesakes to him, conspire in proceeding with him, resemble his disposition and nature. It is a complication, a comprisal, a collection and sum of all wickedness; opposite to all the principal virtues (to veracity and sincerity, to charity and justice), transgressing all the great commandments, violating immediately and directly all the duties concerning our neighbour.

To lie simply is a great fault, being a deviation from that good rule which prescribeth truth in all our words; rendering us unlike and disagreeable to God, who is *the God of truth*³ (who loveth truth, and practiseth it

¹ Ps. l. 19, 20.

² Apoc. xii. 10; John viii. 44.

³ Eph. iv. 25; 1 Pet. ii. 1; Ps. xxxi. 5; xxv. 10; lxxxvi. 15; lxxxix. 14; cxlvi. 6; Prov. xii. 22; vi. 17.

in all his doings, who abominateth all falsehood); including a treacherous breach of faith toward mankind (we being all, in order to the maintenance of society, by an implicit compact obliged by speech to declare our mind, to inform truly, and not to impose upon our neighbour); arguing pusillanimous timorousness and impotency of mind, a distrust in God's help, and diffidence in all good means to compass our designs; begetting deception and error, a foul and ill-favoured brood: lying, I say, is upon such accounts a sinful and blameable thing: and of all lies those certainly are the worst, which proceed from malice, or from vanity, or from both, and which work mischief; such as slanders are.

Again, to bear any hatred or ill-will, to exercise enmity towards any man, to design or procure any mischief to our neighbour, whom even Jews were commanded to *love as themselves*⁴, whose good, by many laws, and upon divers scores, we are obliged to tender as our own, is a heinous fault: and of this apparently the slanderer is most guilty in the highest degree. For evidently true it is which the Wise Man affirmeth, *A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted with it*⁵; there is no surer argument of extreme hatred; nothing but the height of ill-will can suggest this practice. The slanderer is an enemy, as the most fierce and outrageous, so the most base and unworthy that can be: he fighteth with the most perilous and most unlawful weapon, in the most furious and foul way that can be. His weapon is an envenomed *arrow full of deadly poison*, which *he shooteth suddenly, and feareth not*⁶; a weapon which by no force can be resisted, by no art declined, whose impression is altogether inevitable and unsustainable. It is a most insidious, most treacherous and cowardly way of fighting; wherein manifestly the weakest and basest spirits have extreme advantage, and may easily prevail against the bravest and worthiest: for no man of honour or honesty can in way of resist-

⁴ Levit. xix. 18.

⁵ Prov. xxvi. 28.

⁶ James iii. 8; Ps. lxiv. 3, 4; lvii. 4.

ance or requital deign to use it, but must infallibly without repugnance be borne down thereby. By it the vile practiser achieveth the greatest mischief that can be. His words are, as the Psalmist saith of Doeg, *devouring words (Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue*⁷); and, *A man (saith the Wise Man) that beareth false witness against his neighbour, is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow*⁸; that is, he is a complicated instrument of all mischiefs: he smiteth and bruiseeth like a *maul*, he cutteth and pierceth like a *sword*; he thus doth hurt near at hand, and at a distance he woundeth like a *sharp arrow*; it is hard any where to evade him, or to get out of his reach. *Many (saith another wise man, the imitator of Solomon) have fallen by the edge of the sword; but not so many as have fallen by the tongue. Well is he that is defended from it, and hath not passed through the venom thereof; who hath not drawn the yoke thereof; nor hath been bound in its bands. For the yoke thereof is a yoke of iron, and the bands thereof are bands of brass. The death thereof is an evil death; the grave were better than it*⁹ Incurable are the wounds which the slanderer inflicteth, irreparable the damages which he causeth, indelible the marks which he leaveth. *No balsam can heal the biting of a sycophant*¹; no thread can stitch up a good name torn by calumnious defamation; no soap is able to cleanse from the stains aspersed by a foul mouth. *Aliquid adhærebit*; somewhat always of suspicion and ill opinion will stick in the minds of those who have given ear to slander, So extremely opposite is this practice unto the queen of virtues, *charity*. Its property indeed is to *believe all things*², that is, all things for the best, and to the advantage of our neighbour; not so much as to suspect any evil of him, with-

⁷ Ps. lii. 4.

⁸ Prov. xxv. 18; xii. 6.—“An ungodly man diggeth up evil, and in his lips there is a burning fire.” Prov. xvi. 27.

⁹ Ecclus. xxviii. 18, &c.

¹ Adversus sycophantæ morsum nullum est remedium.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

out unavoidable manifest cause : how much more, not to devise any falsehood against him ! It covereth all things, studiously conniving at real defects, and concealing assured miscarriages³ : how much more not divulging imaginary or false scandals ! It disposeth to seek and further any the least good concerning him : how much more will it hinder committing grievous outrage upon his dearest good name !

Again, all injustice is abominable : to do any sort of wrong is a heinous crime ; that crime, which of all most immediately tendeth to the dissolution of society, and disturbance of human life ; which God therefore doth most loathe, and men have reason especially to detest. And of this the slanderer is most deeply guilty. *A witness of Belial scorneth judgment, and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity*⁴, saith the Wise Man. He is indeed, according to just estimation, guilty of all kinds whatever of injury, breaking all the second table of commands respecting our neighbour. Most formally and directly he *beareth false witness against his neighbour* ; he doth *covet his neighbour's goods* : for 'tis constantly out of such an irregular desire for his own presumed advantage, to dispossess his neighbour of some good, and transfer it on himself, that the slanderer uttereth his tale ; he is ever a thief and robber of his good name, a deflowerer and defiler of his reputation, an assassin and murderer of his honour⁵. So doth he violate all the rules of justice, and perpetrateth all sorts of wrong against his neighbour.

He may indeed perhaps conceive it no great matter that he committeth ; because he doth not act in so boisterous and bloody a way, but only by words, which are subtile, slim, and transient things ; upon his neighbour's credit only, which is no substantial or visible

³ Prov. xvii. 9.

⁴ Prov. xix. 28.

⁵ *Dei episcopos linguæ gladio jugulâstis, fundentes sanguinem non corporis, sed honoris.*—*Op. lib. ii.* “Wo be to them who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.”—Isa. v. 23.

matter. He draweth, thinks he, no blood, nor breaketh any bones, nor impresseth any remarkable scar: 'tis only the soft air he breaketh with his tongue, 'tis only a slight character that he stampeth on the fancy, 'tis only an imaginary stain that he daubeth his neighbour with: therefore he supposeth no great wrong done, and seemeth to himself innocent, or very excusable. But these conceits arise from great inconsiderateness, or mistake; nor can they excuse the slanderer from grievous injustice. For in dealing with our neighbour, and meddling with his property, we are not to value things according to our fancy, but according to the price set on them by the owner: we must not reckon that a trifle, which he prizeth as a jewel. Since then all men (especially men of honour and honesty) do, from a necessary instinct of nature, estimate their good name beyond any of their goods, yea do commonly hold it more dear and precious than their very lives; we, by violently or fraudulently bereaving them of it, do them no less wrong, than if we should rob or cozen them of their substance; yea, than if we should maim their body, or spill their blood, or even stop their breath. If they as grievously feel it, and resent it as deeply, as they do any other outrage, the injury is really as great to them. Even the slanderer's own judgment and conscience might tell him so much: for they who most slight another's fame, are usually very tender of their own, and can with no patience endure that others should touch it: which demonstrates the inconsiderateness of their judgment, and the iniquity of their practice. It is an injustice not to be corrected or cured. Thefts may be restored, wounds may be cured; but there is no restitution or cure of a lost good name: it is therefore an irreparable injury.

Nor is the thing itself, in true judgment, contemptible; but in itself really very considerable. *A good name*, saith Solomon himself (no fool), *is rather to be chosen than great riches; and loving favour rather than silver and gold*⁶. In its consequences it is much

⁶ Prov. xxii. 1; xv. 30; Eccles. vii. 1.

more so ; the chief interests of a man, the success of his affairs, his ability to do good (for himself, his friends, his neighbour), his safety, the best comforts and conveniences of his life, sometimes his life itself, depending thereon⁷ : so that whoever doth snatch or filch it from him, doth not only, according to his opinion, and in moral value, but in real effect, commonly rob, sometimes murder, ever exceedingly wrong his neighbour. It is often the sole reward of a man's virtue and all the fruit of his industry ; so that by depriving him of that, he is robbed of all his estate, and left stark naked of all, excepting a good conscience, which is beyond the reach of the world, and which no malice or misfortune can divest him of. Full then of iniquity, full of uncharitableness, full of all wickedness, is this practice ; and consequently full it is of folly. No man, one would think, of any tolerable sense, should dare or deign to incur the guilt of a practice so vile and base, so indeed diabolical and detestable. But further more particularly,

2. The slanderer is plainly a fool ; because he maketh wrong judgments and valuations of things, and accordingly driveth on silly bargains for himself, in result whereof he proveth a great loser. He means by his calumnious stories either to vent some passion boiling in him, or to compass some design which he affects, or to please some humour that he is possessed with : but is any of these things worth purchasing at so dear a rate ? Can there be any valuable exchange for our honesty ? Is it not more advisable to suppress our passion, or to let it evaporate otherwise, than to discharge it in so foul a way ? Is it not better to let go a petty interest, than to further it by committing so notorious and heinous a sin ; to let an ambitious project sink, than to buoy it up by such base means ? Is it not wisdom rather to smother, or curb our humour, than by satisfying it thus, to forfeit our innocence ? Can any thing in the world be so considerable, that for its sake we

⁷ Prov. xii. 6.

should defile our souls by so foul a practice, making shipwreck of a good conscience, abandoning honour and honesty, incurring all the guilt and all the punishment due to so enormous a crime? Is it not far more wisdom, contentedly to see our neighbour to enjoy credit and success, to flourish and thrive in the world, than by such base courses to sully his reputation, to rifle him of his goods, to supplant or cross him in his affairs? We do really, when we think thus to depress him, and to climb up to wealth or credit by the ruins of his honour, but debase ourselves. Whatever comes of it (whether he succeeds or is disappointed therein), assuredly he that useth such courses will himself be the greatest loser and deepest sufferer. 'Tis true which the Wise Man saith, *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death*^a. And, *Wo unto them* (saith the Prophet) *that draw iniquity with cords of vanity*^b; that is, who by falsehood endeavour to compass unjust designs.

But it is not, perhaps he will pretend, for to assuage a private passion, or to promote his particular concernment, that he makes so bold with his neighbour, or deals so harshly with him; but for the sake of orthodox doctrine, for advantage of the true Church, for the advancement of public good, he judgeth it expedient to asperse him. This indeed is the covert of innumerable slanders: zeal for some opinion, or some party, beareth out men of sectarian and factious spirits in such practices; they may do, they may say, any thing for those fine ends. What is a little truth, what is any man's reputation, in comparison to the carrying on such brave designs? But (to omit that men do usually prevaricate in these cases; that it is not commonly for love of truth, but of themselves; not so much for the benefit of their sect, but for their own interest, that they calumniate) this plea will no wise justify such practice. For truth and sincerity, equity and candour, meekness and charity are inviolably to be observed, not only toward

^a Prov. xxi. 6.

^b Isa. v. 18.

dissenters in opinion, but even toward declared enemies of truth itself; we are to *bless them* (that is, to speak well of them, and to wish well to them) *not to curse them* (that is, not to reproach them, or to wish them ill, much less to belie them). Truth also, as it cannot ever need, so doth it also loathe and scorn the patronage and the succour of lies; it is able to support and protect itself by fair means; it will not be killed upon a pretence of saving it, or thrive by its own ruin. Nor indeed can any party be so much strengthened and underpropt, as it will be weakened and undermined, by such courses: no cause can stand firm upon a bottom so loose and slippery, as falsehood is: all the good a slanderer can do, is to disparage what he would maintain. In truth, no heresy can be worse than that would be, which should allow to play the devil in any case. He that can dispense with himself to slander a Jew or a Turk, doth in so doing render himself worse than either of them by profession are: for even they, and even pagans themselves, disallow the practice of inhumanity and iniquity. All men by light of nature avow truth to be honourable, and faith to be indispensably observed. He doth not understand what it is to be Christian, or careth not to practise according thereto, who can find in his heart, in any case, upon any pretence, to calumniate. In fine, to prostitute our conscience, or sacrifice our honesty, for any cause, to any interest whatever, can never be warrantable or wise. Further,

3. The slanderer is a fool, because he useth improper means and preposterous methods of effecting his purposes. As there is no design worth the carrying on by ways of falsehood and iniquity; so is there scarce any (no good or lawful one at least) which may not more surely, more safely, more cleverly be achieved by means of truth and justice. Is not always the straight way more short than the oblique and crooked? Is not the plain way more easy than the rough and cragged? Is not the fair way more pleasant and passable than the foul? Is it not better to walk in paths that are open and allowed, than in those that are shut up and pro-

hibited? than to clamber over walls, to break through fences, to trespass upon enclosures? Surely yes: *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely*¹. Using strict veracity and integrity, candour and equity, is the best method of accomplishing good designs. Our own industry, good use of the parts and faculties God hath given us, embracing fair opportunities, God's blessing and providence, are sufficient means to rely upon for procuring, in an honest way, whatever is convenient for us. These are ways approved, and amiable to all men; they procure the best friends, and fewest enemies; they afford to the practiser a cheerful courage, and good hope; they meet with less disappointment, and have no regret or shame attending them. He that hath recourse to the other base means, and *maketh lies his refuge*, as he renounceth all just and honest means, as he disclaimeth all hope in God's assistance, and forfeiteth all pretence to his blessing²; so he cannot reasonably expect good success, or be satisfied in any undertaking. The supplanting way indeed seems the most curt and compendious way of bringing about dishonest or dishonourable designs: but as a good design is certainly dishonoured thereby, so is it apt thence to be defeated; it raising up enemies and obstacles, yielding advantages to whoever is disposed to cross us. As in trade it is notorious, that the best course to thrive is by dealing squarely and truly; any fraud or cozenage appearing there doth overthrow a man's credit, and drive away custom from him: so in all other transactions, as he that dealeth justly and fairly will have his affairs proceed roundly, and shall find men ready to comply with him; so he that is observed to practise falsehood will be declined by some, opposed by others, disliked by all: no man scarce willingly will have to do with him; he is commonly forced to stand out in business, as one that plays foul play.

4. Lastly, The slanderer is a very fool, as bringing many great inconveniences, troubles, and mischiefs on himself.

¹ Prov. x. 9.

² Isa. xxviii. 15. 17; Jer. xxviii. 15.

First, *A fool's mouth* (saith the Wise Man) *is his destruction, his lips are the snare of his soul*³; and if any kind of speech is destructive and dangerous, then is this certainly most of all: for by no means can a man inflame so fierce anger, impress so stiff hatred, raise so deadly enmity against himself, and consequently so endanger his safety, ease, and welfare, as by this practice. Men can more easily endure, and sooner will forgive, any sort of abuse than this; they will rather pardon a robber of their goods, than a defamer of their good name.

Secondly, Such an one indeed is not only odious to the person immediately concerned, but generally to all men that observe his practice: every man presently will be sensible how easily it may be his own case, how liable he may be to be thus abused, in a way against which there is no guard or defence. The slanderer therefore is apprehended a common enemy, dangerous to all men; and thence rendereth all men averse from him, and ready to cross him⁴. Love and peace, tranquillity and security, can only be maintained by innocent and true dealing: so the Psalmist hath well taught us: *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile*⁵.

Thirdly, All wise, all noble, all ingenuous and honest persons have an aversion from this practice, and cannot entertain it with any acceptance or complacence. *A righteous man hateth lying*⁶, saith the Wise Man. It is only ill-natured and ill-nurtured, unworthy and naughty people, that are willing auditors or encouragers thereof. *A wicked doer* (saith the Wise Man again) *giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue*⁷. All love of truth, and regard to justice, and sense of humanity, all generosity and ingenuity, all charity and good-will to men, must be extinct

³ Prov. xviii. 7; xiii. 3; xviii. 21.

⁴ ———— ecquid

Ad te post paulo ventura pericula sentis?—*Hor.* lib. i. Ep. 18.

— sibi quisque timet, quanquam est intactus et odit.—*Idem.*

⁵ Ps. xxxiv. 12, 13.

⁶ Prov. xiii. 5.

⁷ Prov. xvii. 4.

in those who can with delight, or indeed with patience, lend an ear, or give any countenance to a slanderer: and is not he a very fool, who chooseth to displease the best, only soothing the worst of men?

Fourthly, The slanderer indeed doth banish himself from all conversation and company, or, intruding into it, becomes very disgustful thereto: for he worthily is not only looked upon as an enemy to those whom he slandereth, but to those also upon whom he obtrudeth his calumnious discourse. He not only wrongeth the former by the injury, but he mocketh the latter by the falsehood of his stories; implicitly charging his hearers with weakness and credulity, or with injustice and perversity.

Fifthly, He also derogateth wholly from his own credit, in all matters of discourse. For he that dareth thus to injure his neighbour, who can trust him in any thing he speaks? What will not he say to please his vile humour, or further his base interest? What (thinks any man) will he scruple or boggle at, who hath the heart in thus doing wrong and mischief to imitate the devil? Farther,

Sixthly, This practice is perpetually haunted with most troublesome companions, inward regret, and self-condemnation, fear, and disquiet: the conscience of dealing so unworthily doth smite and rack him; he is ever in danger, and thence in fear to be discovered, and requited for it⁸. Of these passions the manner of his behaviour is a manifest indication: for men do seldom vent their slanderous reports openly and loudly, to the face, or in the ear of those who are concerned in them; but do utter them in a low voice, in dark corners, out of sight and hearing, where they conceit themselves at present safe from being called to an account. *Swords* (saith the Psalmist of such persons) *are in their lips*;

⁸ 'Ο κακῶς εἰπὼν ἐναγώνιος λοιπὸν ἐστίν, ὑποπτέυει τε, καὶ δέδοικε, καὶ μετανοεῖ, καὶ κατεσθίει τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γλῶτταν, δεδοικῶς, καὶ τρέμων, μήποτε εἰς ἑτέρους ἐξενεχθὲν τὸ ῥῆμα μέγαν ἐπαγάγῃ τὸν κίνδυνον, καὶ περιττὴν ἔχθραν καὶ ἀνόνητον ἐργάσῃται τοῖς εἰρηκόσι, &c.—Chrys. Ἄνδρ. γ.

*Who, say they, doth hear? And, Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off*⁹, saith David again, intimating the common manner of this practice. Calumny is like *the plague, that walketh in darkness*¹⁰. Hence appositely are the practisers thereof termed whisperers and backbiters: their heart suffers them not openly to avow, their conscience tells them they cannot fairly defend their practice. Again,

Seventhly, The consequent of this practice is commonly shameful disgrace, with an obligation to retract, and render satisfaction; for seldom doth calumny pass long without being detected and confuted¹. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely; but he that perverteth his ways shall be known*: and, *The lip of truth shall be established for ever; but a lying lip is but for a moment*², saith the great observer of things³. And when the slander is disclosed, the slanderer is obliged to excuse (that is, to palliate one lie with another, if he can do it), or forced to recant, with much disgrace and extreme displeasure to himself; he is also many times constrained, with his loss and pain, to repair the mischief he hath done.

Eighthly, To this in likelihood the concernments of men, and the powers which guard justice, will forcibly bring him: and certainly his conscience will bind him thereto; God will indispensably exact it from him. He can never have any sound quiet in his mind, he can never expect pardon from Heaven, without acknowledging his fault, repairing the wrong he hath done, restoring that good name of which he dispossessed his neighbour: for in this no less than in other cases conscience cannot be satisfied, remission will not be granted, except due

⁹ Ps. lix. 7; ci. 5.

¹⁰ Ps. xci. 6.

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 11.—“The mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.”

² Prov. x. 9.

³ Prov. xii. 19; (Prov. xxvi. 26.)—“Refrain your tongue from backbiting; for there is no word so secret that shall go for nought; and the mouth that slandereth, slayeth the soul.”—Wisd. i. 11. Et delator habet quod dedit exitium.—Vide Tac. An. i. p. 45.

restitution be performed: and of all restitutions this surely is the most difficult, most laborious, and most troublesome. It is nowise so hard to restore goods stolen or extorted, as to recover a good opinion lost, to wipe off aspersions cast on a man's name, to cure a wounded reputation: the most earnest and diligent endeavour can hardly ever effect this, or spread the plaster so far as the sore hath reached. The slanderer therefore doth engage himself into great straits, incurring an obligation to repair an almost irreparable mischief.

Ninthly, This practice doth also certainly revenge itself, imposing on its actor a perfect retaliation; *a tooth for a tooth*; an irrecoverable infamy to himself, for the infamy he causeth to others. Who will regard his fame, who will be concerned to excuse his faults, who so outrageously abuseth the reputation of others? He suffereth justly, he is paid in his own coin, will any man think, who doth hear him reproached⁴.

Tenthly, In fine, the slanderer (if he doth not by serious and sore repentance retract his practice) doth banish himself from heaven and happiness, doth expose himself to endless miseries and sorrows. For if none that *maketh a lie shall enter into the heavenly city*; if *without* those mansions of joy and bliss *every one* must eternally abide that *loveth or maketh a lie*; if, *πᾶσι τοῖς ψευδέσι*, to all liars their portion is assigned in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone⁵; then assuredly

⁴ "He that diligently seeketh good, procureth favour; but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him."—Prov. xi. 27; xxvi. 27. It was the punishment of slanderers in the Law:—"Then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother."—Deut. xix. 19. "A false witness shall not be unpunished; and he that speaketh lies shall not escape."—Prov. xix. 5. "God shall destroy thee for ever, thou false tongue."—Ps. lii. 4, 5. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight."—Prov. xii. 22.

⁵ Rev. xxi. 27; xxii. 15; xxi. 8. It is one of those things which God especially doth abominate.—Prov. vi. 19; xii. 22. "A false witness shall perish."—Prov. xxi. 28.

the capital liar, the slanderer (who lieth most injuriously and mischievously), shall be far excluded from felicity, and thrust down into the depth of that miserable place. If, as St. Paul saith, no *railer*, or evil speaker, *shall inherit the kingdom of God*⁶; how far thence shall they be removed, who without any truth or justice do speak ill of and reproach their neighbour? If for every *ἀργὸν ῥῆμα*, *idle*, or *vain word* we must *render a strict account*⁷; how much more shall we be severely reckoned with for this sort of words, so empty of truth and void of equity; words that are not only negatively vain, or useless, but positively vain, as false, and spoken to bad purpose? If slander perhaps here may evade detection, or escape deserved punishment; yet infallibly hereafter, at the dreadful day, it shall be disclosed, irreversibly condemned, inevitably persecuted with condign reward of utter shame and sorrow.

Is not he, then, he who, out of malignity, or vanity, to serve any design, or soothe any humour in himself or others, doth by committing this sin involve himself into all these great evils, both here and hereafter, a most desperate and deplorable fool?

Having thus described the nature of this sin, and declared the folly thereof, we need, I suppose, to say no more for dissuading it; especially to persons of a generous and honest mind, who cannot but scorn to debase and defile themselves by so mean and vile a practice; or to those who seriously do profess Christianity, that is, the religion which peculiarly above all others prescribeth constant truth, strictest justice, and highest charity.

I shall only add, that since our faculty of speech (wherein we do excel all other creatures) was given us, as in the first place to praise and glorify our Maker, so in the next to benefit and help our neighbour; as an instrument of mutual succour and delectation, of friendly commerce and pleasant converse together: for instructing and advising, comforting and cheering one another;

⁶ 1 Cor. vi. 10; v. 11.

⁷ Matt. xii. 36.

it is an unnatural perverting, and an irrational abuse thereof, to employ it to the damage, disgrace, vexation, or wrong in any kind, of our brother. Better indeed had we been as brutes without its use, than we are, if so worse than brutishly we abuse it.

Finally, All these things being considered, we may, I think, reasonably conclude it most evidently true, that *he which uttereth slander is a fool.*

SERMON VI.

AGAINST RASH CENSURING AND JUDGING.

MATT. vii. 1.

“Judge not.”

THESE words, being part of our Saviour's most divine Sermon upon the Mount, contain a very short precept, but of vast use and consequence; the observance whereof would much conduce to the good of the world, and to the private quiet of each man; it interdicting a practice, which commonly produceth very mischievous and troublesome effects; a practice never rare among men, but now very rife; when, with the general causes, which ever did and ever will in some measure dispose men thereto, some special ones do concur, that powerfully incline to it.

There are innate to men an unjust pride, emboldening them to take upon them beyond what belongeth to them, or doth become them; an excessive self-love, prompting them, as to flatter themselves in their own conceit, so to undervalue others, and from vilifying their neighbours, to seek commendation to themselves; an envious malignity, which ever lusteth to be pampered with finding or making faults; many corrupt affections, springing from fleshly nature, which draw or drive men to this practice; so that in all ages it hath been very common, and never any profession hath been so much invaded as that of the judge.

But divers peculiar causes have such an influence upon our age, as more strongly to sway men thereto: there is a wonderful affectation to seem hugely wise and witty; and how can we seem such, more than in putting on the garb and countenance of judges; scanning and passing sentence upon all persons, and all things incident? There is an extreme niceness and delicacy of conceit, which maketh us apt to relish few things, and to distaste any thing; there are dissensions in opinion, and addictedness to parties, which do tempt us, and seem to authorize us in condemning all that differ from us; there is a deep corruption of mind and manners, which engageth men in their own defence to censure others, diverting the blame from home, and shrouding their own under the covert of other men's faults¹; there are new principles of morality and policy become current with great vogue, which allow to do or say any thing subservient to our interests or designs; which also do represent all men so bad, that, admitting them true, nothing hardly can be said ill of any man beyond truth and justice.

Hence is the world become so extremely critical and censorious, that in many places the chief employment of men, and the main body of conversation is, if we mark it, taken up in judging: every gossiping is, as it were, a court of justice; every seat becometh a tribunal; at every table standeth a bar, whereto all men are cited, whereat every man, as it happeneth, is arraigned and sentenced: no sublimity or sacredness of dignity, no integrity or innocence of life, no prudence or circumspection of demeanour, can exempt any person from it: not one escapeth being taxed under some scandalous name, or odious character, one or other². Not only the outward actions and visible prac-

¹ *Expedit vobis neminem videri bonum; quasi aliena virtus exprobratio vestrorum delictorum sit.*—*Sen. de Vit. B.* xix.

² *Εἰς τὰ τῶν ἄλλων πολυπραγμονεῖν καὶ καταδικάζειν δαπανᾷται ἡμῖν ἅπας ὁ βίος· καὶ οὐδένα ἂν εὖροις ταχέως, οὐ βιωτικὸν ἄνδρα, οὐ μοναχὸν ταύτης ἐλεύθερον τῆς ἁμαρτίας, καίτοιγε τοσαύτης ἀπειλῆς κειμένης αὐτῇ.*—*Chrys. ad den. t. vi. Orat. 42.*

tices of men are judged ; but their retired sentiments are brought under trial, their inward dispositions have a verdict past on them, their final states are determined. Whole bodies of men are thus judged at once, and nothing it is in one breath to damn whole churches, at one push to throw down whole nations into the bottomless pit. All mankind in a lump is severely censured, as void of any real goodness or true virtue ; so fatally depraved as not to be corrigible by any good discipline, not to be recoverable even by the grace of God : yea, God himself is hardly spared, his providence coming under the bold obloquy of those, who, as the Psalmist speaketh of some in his time, whose race doth yet survive, *speak loftily, and set their mouth against the heavens* ³.

This being too apparently the present state of things, and obvious practice of men, it were desirable that, in order to their being reclaimed, men commonly did well understand the nature of this practice, with the heinous guilt, and consequently the deadly hazard, they do incur thereby : at this purpose my discourse shall aim, wherein I shall endeavour both to describe the nature of the practice forbidden in my text, and to declare the pravity, iniquity, and folly of it.

Judge not. As to the word, we may observe, that it being in itself, according to its primitive sense, of a middle and indifferent signification, is yet frequently in the Scripture used in the worst sense ; so as to import those acts, or those effects of judgment, which pass to the disadvantage of the persons subjected thereto ; for condemnation, and for infliction of punishment : and this sense here surely the word doth principally respect, yet not so precisely as to exclude somewhat contained in the larger sense : we are so prohibited the condemning and punishing our neighbour in his good name, that withal some acts antecedent, or concomitant to those, are glanced at in the prohibition : undue application thereto, unjust proceeding therein,

³ Psalm lxxiii. 8, 9.

are also signified unlawful; for the meaning of the word and the reason of the case may be so far extended.

But, for the fuller and clearer understanding of the matter, we must observe, that there are divers sorts of judging, or acts resembling judgment, which do not belong to this precept; which it is requisite to distinguish from this judging prohibited.

1. That exercising public judgment, or administering justice, is not here prohibited, I need not to insist; that is necessary: human society could not subsist, right could not be maintained, nor peace preserved without it; God thereby governeth the world, earthly judges being his instruments and substitutes; such judgment is not so much the act of men, as of God himself, by whose authority, in whose name, for whose service, it is ministered. As Moses told the judges in his time, *You shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's*⁴. And in numberless places of Scripture this judgment is allowed and authorized; it therefore is not touched here.

2. That trial and censure, although out of court, and without formal process, which any kind of superiors do exercise upon their inferiors committed to their inspection and care; such as of parents over children, masters over servants, pastors over their flock, any governors over their charge, their admonitions, reprehensions, and corrections are to be excepted hence, as being in themselves needful and warranted, yea enjoined by God.

3. Neither are fraternal correction or friendly reproof, proceeding out of charitable design, upon clear ground, in fit season, within reasonable compass, concerned in this prohibition; this being a wholesome practice, and a duty incumbent upon us: *Thou shalt* (saith the law) *not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him*⁵.

4. All observing and reflecting upon our neighbour's

⁴ Deut. i. 17.

⁵ Levit. xix. 17; 1 Thess. v. 14.

actions, all framing an opinion about them, and expressing our minds concerning them, are not forbidden. For we are not bound perpetually to shut our eyes, or go about hoodwinked; nor to stop our ears and make ourselves deaf; and how can we forbear to think according to plain evidence? how can we resist the impressions of sense upon our minds? how can we contest notorious experience? how also, barring such apprehensions of obvious and apparent things, could we bear testimony concerning them? how could we signify our approbation or dislike of them? how could we for his amendment admonish or reprove our neighbour, as in some cases we are obliged to do?

5. We are not hence obliged to think so well of all men, as without competent knowledge always to rely upon their pretences, or to entrust our interests in their hands; for common experience acquainteth us that we may be deceived in trusting men; prudence biddeth us in matters of importance not to confide in uncertainties; wherefore we shall not be culpable for being wary in such cases: this indeed is not a positive judgment, but only a waving to declare in favour, when sufficient ground of doing so doth not appear; it is only a reasonable suspecting the possibility of miscarriage in some persons, not a downright asserting ill concerning any one man; wherefore to do it, as it suiteth discretion, so it doth not thwart justice or charity; and cannot therefore be prohibited here.

6. We are also not hence obliged, in contradiction to plain sense, to judge well of men; accounting him for a saint, or a good man, whom we see living disorderly, or committing scandalous offences, plainly repugnant to the rules of piety, justice, or sobriety.

In fine, there are some special cases and circumstances, wherein good men excusably may in severe terms declare their resentment of manifest wickedness, especially such as is prejudicial to God's honour and public good. Of this there are divers instances, which yet hardly can be reduced to common rule, or proposed for general example; the matter being ticklish, and

men being apt to pervert any liberty or pretence of this kind, by indulging to their own bad humours and passions.

These sorts of allowable judgments being excepted, it is then private, affected, needless, groundless, rash, and harsh censuring the persons or actions of our brethren; such as doth resemble not the acting of a lawful superior, of a needful witness, of a faithful friend, but of a judge acting without competent right, upon no good grounds, or in undue manner, which is here interdicted: the word *judging* doth well imply the nature of this fault, the manner of our proceeding therein, the grounds of its unlawfulness; neither perhaps can we better understand our duty in this matter, than by expending what are the properties and obligations of a judge, and comparing our practice thereto; for thence it may plainly appear how unqualified we are to bear this office, and how unduly we execute it.

1. No judge should intrude himself into the office, or assume a judicial power without competent authority; that is, by delegation from superior powers, or by voluntary reference of the parties concerned. This condition we fail in, whenever without warrant from God, or special reason exacting it from us, we do pry into, scan, and tax the actions of our neighbour⁶. When, I say, we are pragmatically inquisitive into the purposes and proceedings of our superiors, of our equals, of those who are not subject to our charge and care, when we narrowly examine them, when we peremptorily blame them, then do we unduly exalt ourselves above them, and exercise an unwarrantable jurisdiction over them. What sense doth offer we may receive in; what judgment reason doth extort, we may follow; what testimony public benefit requireth, we may yield; what expression charity doth call for toward our neighbour's edification, we may seasonably vent: but if we proceed further in this way, the party concerned may appeal from us as incompetent and unlawful judges of

⁶ 1 Pet. iv. 15; 1 Thess. iv. 11; Prov. xxvii. 16; 1 Tim. v. 13.

his actions or his state; we are arrogant and injurious in presuming to exercise that office⁷. God is the master and judge of men, and, without authority from him, we must not presume to judge his servants and subjects: so we are taught by St. Paul: *Who* (saith he) *art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth*⁸: and St. James in like manner, upon the same ground, expostulateth with the censurer: *There is* (saith he) *one Lawgiver, who is able to save, or to destroy; who art thou that judgest another*⁹? Our Lord himself for this reason declined intermeddling in the affairs of men; *Who* (said he) *made me a judge or divider over you*¹? And shall we constitute ourselves in the office, shall we seat ourselves on the tribunal without any commission from God or call from men? How many judges, if this proviso were observed, would have their quietus! how many censurers would be voided hence!

2. A judge should be free from all prejudices and all partial affections; especially from those which are disadvantageous to the party in danger to suffer²; such as tempt or incline to condemn him; from ill-opinion and ill-will, from anger, envy, revengefulness, contempt, and the like: for he that is possessed with these is nowise qualified to be a judge; his eyes are blinded, or distorted, or infected with bad tinctures, so that he cannot discern what is right, or that he seeth things represented in the wrong place, and under false colours; his mind is discomposed and disturbed, so that he cannot calmly and steadily apprehend or consider the just state of the case; his will is biassed, and strongly propendeth one way, so that he cannot proceed uprightly in a straight and even course; being not indifferently affected, but concerned on one side, he is become a party, or an adversary, and thence unfit to be a judge; he hath determined the cause with himself beforehand, so

⁷ Quid in potestatem alienam irrui? quid temerarius Dei tribunal ascendis?—*Opt.* lib. ii.

⁸ Rom. xiv. 4.

¹ Luke xii. 14.

⁹ James iv. 11.

² Levit. xix. 15.

that no place is left to further discussion or defence³; wherefore before such a judge the best cause will fall, the clearest innocence shall not preserve from condemnation. He, therefore, that will undertake this office, must first divest himself of all prejudices, must rid himself of all passions, must purify himself from all corrupt inclinations, taking care not to come with a condemning mind, or a lust to punish the obnoxious party; otherwise a just exception lieth against him, and reasonably his jurisdiction may be declined.

If this rule were put in practice, there would be little censuring; for few come to it with a free and pure mind; few blame their neighbours without some pre-occupation of judgment, or some disaffection toward them.

3. A judge should never proceed in judgment, without careful examination of the cause, so as well to understand it⁴. Even those, who out of indispensable duty, or by a just power, may call others to account, are yet obliged to be wary, and never to pass sentence without due cognizance of the cause; otherwise they will judge blindly and rashly; they will either decide wrongly, or so truly, that doing it must be imputed not to their virtue, but to their fortune; often they will be mistaken, and it is luck that they are not so always: and what plainer iniquity can there be, than that the reputation or real interest of any man should be put to the arbitrament of chance; that he should be defamed, or damnified, not for a certain fault, but from an unhappy lot? As things viewed at a distance appear much different in bigness, shape, and colour, from what they are in nature and reality; so if we do not look nearly and narrowly, we shall greatly misapprehend the nature, the degrees, the right characters of things and of persons: then be our pretence to judge never so fair, yet our proceeding is unjust; then if we do unduly invade the place, it will be a great aggravation of our misdemeanour: if of our own head and pleasure we will constitute ourselves judges, yet at least we should

³ James ii. 1; Matt. xxii. 16; 1 Tim. v. 21. ⁴ Deut. i. 16.

act the judge's part, in patiently attending to, and heedfully sifting the cause: if we have not a stomach to hear, if we will not afford the care to mind what may be alleged in favour of the party concerned; if we cannot or will not scan every point and circumstance which may serve to acquit him, or to excuse and extenuate his guilt, why do we undertake to be his judges? why do we engage ourselves into the commission of so palpable injustice; yea, of so disgraceful folly? for, *He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is* (saith the Wise Man) *a folly and shame unto him*⁵. This caution excludeth rash judgment, from which if men would abstain, there would be little censuring: for nothing is more ordinary, than for men to do like those of whom St. Jude saith, "Ὅσα οὐκ οἶδασι βλασφημοῦσι, *they rail at what they know not*"⁶; they censure persons with whom they are not thoroughly acquainted, they condemn actions whereof they do not clearly ken the reasons; they little weigh the causes and circumstances which urge or force men to do things; they stand at great distance, and yet with great assurance and peremptoriness determine how things are, as if they did see through them, and knew them most exactly.

4. A judge should never pronounce final sentence, but *ex allegatis et probatis*, upon good grounds, after certain proof, and upon full conviction. Not any slight conjecture, or thin surmise; any idle report, or weak pretence, is sufficient to ground a condemnation upon; the case should be irrefragably clear and sure before we determine on the worst side': *Judge not* (saith our Lord) *according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*⁷. The Jews, seeing our Lord cure an infirm person upon the sabbath day, presently upon that semblance condemned him of violating the Law; not considering either the sense of the Law, or the nature of his performance; and this he termeth "unrighteous judgment." Every accusation should be deemed null, until,

⁵ Prov. xviii. 13.

⁶ Jude 10.

⁷ ——— μὴ πρότερον τὰς ψήφους ἐκφέρειν, πρὶν ἂν ἐναργεῖς ἀποδείξεις γένηνται.—Chrys. in Gen. Hom. 42.

⁸ John vii. 24.

both as to matter of fact, and in point of right, it be firmly proved true⁹; it sufficeth not to presume it may be so; to say, 'It seemeth thus,' doth not sound like the voice of a judge; otherwise, seeing there never is wanting some colour of accusation, every action being liable to some suspicion, or sinister construction, no innocence could be secure, no person could escape condemnation; the reputation and interest of all men living would continually stand exposed to inevitable danger. It is a rule of equity and humanity, built upon plain reason, that rather a nocent person should be permitted to escape, than an innocent should be constrained to suffer: for the impunity of the one is but an inconvenience; the suffering of the other is wrong: the punishment of the guilty yieldeth only a remote probable benefit; the affliction of the blameless involveth a near certain mischief: wherefore it is more prudent and more righteous to absolve a man, of whose guilt there are probable arguments, than to condemn any man upon bare suspicions. And remarkable it is how God in the Law did prescribe the manner of trial and judgment, even in the highest case, and most nearly touching himself, that of *idolatry*: *If (saith the Law, Deut. xvii. 4,) it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently, and behold it be true, and the thing certain, that such an abomination is wrought in Israel: then shalt thou bring forth that man, or that woman, and shalt stone them.* See what great caution is prescribed, what pregnant evidence is required in such cases: it is not enough that it be reported, or come to our ear; diligent inquiry must be made, it must be found true, it must appear certain, before we may proceed to condemn, or execute; it is indeed not fair judgment, but mere calumny, to condemn a man before he doth, by sufficient proof, appear guilty.

If this rule were regarded, how many censures would be prevented! For do not men catch at any shadow of

⁹ Quod probari non potest, mihi infectum est.—*Bern.*

De occultis cordis alieni temere judicare iniquum est, et cum cujus non videntur opera nisi bona, peccatum est ex suspitione reprehendere.—*Joh. iii. 1. Ep. 1.*

a fault? Are they not ready upon the least presumption to condemn their neighbour? Doth not any, even the weakest and vainest testimony, any wandering hearsay, or vulgar humour, serve to ground the most heavy sentences?

5. From hence is plainly consequent, that there are divers causes wholly exempted from our judgment, and which in no case we must pretend to meddle with; such as are the secret thoughts, affections, and purposes of men, not expressed by plain words, nor declared by overt acts; for a capacity of judging doth ever suppose a power of cognizance; and it being impossible for us to reach the knowledge of those things, we cannot therefore pretend to judge of them. As it is the property of God to search the hearts and try the reins, so it is his prerogative to judge concerning the secret motions in them: the which we attempting to do, no less vainly and foolishly, than presumptuously and profanely, do encroach upon.

This point also being regarded, would prevent innumerable rash judgments; for men commonly do no less dive into the thoughts, and reprehend the inward dispositions and designs of their neighbour, than they do his most apparent and avowed actions; it is almost as ordinary to blame men for the invisible workings of their mind, as for their most visible deportment in conversation.

6. Hence also it is not commonly allowable to judge concerning the state, either present, or final, of our neighbour in regard to God¹; so as to take him for a wicked man, or to denounce reprobation upon him: for the state of men is not so much determined by single actions, as by a body of practice, or by a long course and tenor of life, compounded and complicated of actions in number and kind unconceivably various: it dependeth not only upon external visible behaviour, but upon the practice of close retirements, and occult motions of soul; upon the results of natural temper,

¹ Πολλὰ δεῖ σγραφῆναι, καὶ παθεῖν, πρὶν ἄλλον καταγινῶναι δυσ-
σίβειαν.—Greg. Naz. Or. 26.

upon the influence of fortuitous circumstances: upon many things indiscernible, inscrutable, and unaccountable to us; the which God alone can perceive and estimate thoroughly: *God seeth not* (as he did himself tell Samuel) *as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart: he searcheth our hearts, and understandeth our thoughts afar off; he compasseth our path, and is acquainted with all our ways: he weigheth our spirits; he knoweth our frame; he numbereth our steps*²; he scanneth our designs, and poisseth all our circumstances exactly; he doth penetrate and consider many things transcending our reach, upon which the true worth of persons and real merit of actions do depend: he therefore only can well judge of men's state. As a specious outside doth often cover inward hollowness and foulness, so under an unpromising appearance much solidity and sincerity of goodness may lodge; a dirty ground doth often contain good seeds within it; our judgment therefore in such cases is likely, at least in degree, to be fallacious and unjust; and therefore it is fit to supersede it, according to the advice and discourse of St. Paul: *He that judgeth me is the Lord; therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise* (that is, a right estimate of his person and deeds) *from God*³.

If this were duly considered, many hard thoughts and many harsh words would be spared; men would not be so apt to damn those whom they have no skill to try.

7. Further: a judge should not undertake to proceed against any man, without warning and citing him to appear, or without affording him competent liberty and opportunity to defend and justify himself. Judgment should not be administered clancularly in dark corners, but in open court; not suspiciously, in a mut-

² Ps. cxxxix. 6; 1 Sam. xvi. 7; Isa. xi. 3; Ps. cxxxix. 2, 3; Prov. xvi. 2; 1 Sam. ii. 3; Ps. ciii. 14; Job xiv. 16.

³ 1 Cor. iv. 5.

tering or whispering way; but frankly, with a clear and audible voice; not upon surprise, but with allowance of leisure and advice, that the party may be able to apprehend his case and manage his plea for his best defence: for it may justly be presumed, that as he is most concerned, so he is best acquainted with his own proceedings, and may allege reasons for them, which no man can so well perceive as himself; it is therefore fit that he should be heard before he is condemned, that he may not suffer wrong; at least that he may be convinced that he doth not, and that our proceeding may be cleared from misprision; that also the world may be satisfied of justice being done; and that likewise false accusers may be liable to due shame and chastisement. The manner of proceeding used by the Romans, and reported by Festus in St. Paul's case, was full of reason and equity. *It is not* (said that governor) *the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he, which is accused, have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself, concerning the crime laid against him*⁴. Otherwise indeed any innocence may easily be oppressed irrecoverably, without any defence, and consequently without any means of evasion or redress⁵. We should never yield both ears to the accuser, but reserve one for the accused⁶. The end of justice, we may consider, is not to condemn, nor to work mischief to any one, but rather, so far as may be, to acquit and prevent evil to all; at least it aimeth to clear the truth, and state the case indifferently; wherefore it is just, that all advantage that well can be, should be afforded to the obnoxious

⁴ Acts xxv. 16.

⁵ Χρὴ τοὺς ἐννόμως δικάζοντας τῷ κατηγορουμένῳ θατέραν ταῖν ἀκοαῖν ἀκεραῖαν φυλάξαι, &c.—Theod. Ep. 91.

⁶ God himself, as some of the Fathers observe, hath showed us an example of this equity, *Descendam igitur et videbo*, &c. Gen. xviii. 21.

Καίτοι σαφῶς ἤδει τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκείνων τὴν πονηρίαν. Ἄλλ' ὅμως ἔφη καταβάς ὄψομαι, διδάσκων ἡμᾶς ἀναμένειν τῶν πραγμάτων τὴν πεῖραν.—Theod. Ep. 119, P. Pelagius ad Eliam.

party for his justification and deliverance; at least that he be not denied equal advantage with his prosecutors; humanity would allow him some favour; the most rigorous justice cannot refuse him leave to contest his cause upon equal terms; wherefore it is fit that he should be acquainted with his case, that competent time and means should be afforded him to prepare for his defence, that his plea should receive, if not a favourable, yet a free audience: the contrary practice is indeed rather backbiting, whispering, supplanting, or sycophantry, than fair and lawful judging.

The observation of this rule would also cut off many censures; for seldom it is that our censors do charge men to their faces, but rather take all possible care, that what they say may never come to the ears of those whom they accuse; they fear nothing more than being confronted and detected; they decline the shame and the requital due to their sycophantic practice; which is a manifest argument of their foul dealing; and they no less in reality do thence condemn themselves than they would seem to condemn others.

8. Moreover, a judge is obliged to conform all his determinations to the settled rules of judgment, so as never to condemn any man for acting that which is enjoined, or approved, or permitted by them; he must not pronounce according to his private fancy, or particular affection, but according to the standing laws; which, as they are the only certain rules of moral action, the only grounds of obligation, the only standards of guilt and innocence; so in reason they should be the sole measures of judging: he that proceedeth otherwise is an arbitrary and a slippery judge; he encroacheth upon the right and liberty of those with whom he meddleth, pronouncing them guilty, whom God and reason do proclaim blameless. This is that which St. Paul doth reprove in the 14th to the Romans, and elsewhere⁷. The case was this: some were of

⁷ Rom. xiv; 1 Cor. viii. 8; Col. ii. 16.

opinion, that abstaining from some kinds of meat, and observing some festival times, were matters of duty required by God ; others thought it free to eat any thing, and to use any times alike : these, according to such their private opinions, did censure the practices of each other : one party condemned the other as transgressing duty, the other contemned them as weak in judgment : but the apostle reproveth both as irregular in their behaviour, in taxing one another for matters which on both hands were indifferent ; the divine law having clearly neither enjoined those observances, nor prohibited them ; so that each man had a liberty to do, or to abstain, as he thought good, or most agreeable to his duty, and conducive to his salvation. So is it culpable in us to blame any man for doing that which is not repugnant to God's express command, or to the plain dictates of reason.

The observing this condition would smother many censures : for do we not commonly reprehend our neighbours for practices wholly blameless, perhaps commendable ? Do we not sometimes grievously reproach them for not complying with our desires, for not serving our interests, for not jumping with our humours, for not dancing after our pipe ; for dissenting from us in any conceit, although dubious or false ; for discosting from our practice, although bad or inconvenient ? Say we not ordinarily, He is morose, peevish, singular, rude, because he would not *run with us into the same excess of riot* ; he is weak, nice, superstitious, because he constantly and strictly adhereth to his duty ; he is negligent, loose, profane, because he useth his liberty in some matters indifferent ? Bar such matters of obloquy, into how narrow a compass would it be restrained !

9. Hence further it is to be supposed, that a judge should be a person of good knowledge and ability ; well versed and skilful in the laws concerning matters under debate ; endued with good measure of reason, enabling him as to sift and canvass matters of fact, so to compare them accurately with the rules of right : for nothing is more absurd than an ignorant and unskilful

judge⁸. Men, therefore, of weak capacity, of mean education, of small experience, are qualified to judge in few cases, most things being placed above their reach; such never should presume to censure actions, the worth or moral quality whereof depend upon the stating and resolution of abstruse, intricate, or subtle questions. It is not, therefore, for mechanics or rustics to judge about difficulties of science, about controversies in religion, about mysteries of policy, or reasons of state; or to censure those who deal in them: in so doing, they hugely trespass beyond their calling and sphere; they do strangely misbecome the bench, and will very unto-wardly misbehave themselves thereon; the decision of such matters is to be reserved to those, who by study and experience have attained peculiar faculties to do it respectively.

Observing this point, would draw many down from their usurped seats of judicature, and stop numberless vain sentences; we should have very few judges left, if all men would be so modest and so wise as not to meddle beyond their skill and ability.

10. Again: it is proper for a judge not to make himself an accuser; not to seek for misdemeanours; not to draw more causes under his cognizance than are in course presented before him; he should rather judge as out of constraint, than of choice; rather as sorry to find a necessity, than glad to snatch an occasion of condemning offenders⁹. So should we rather decline than seek the office of censuring our brethren, rather conniving at and concealing their faults, than being forward to expose them; absolute reason only should induce, or indispensable necessity force us thereto.

This also greatly would diminish the trade of censuring; for if we should never censure without great reason or necessity, how seldom should we do it! Do we not rather affect to do it causelessly and needlessly?

⁸ "Εκαστος κρίνει καλῶς ἃ γινώσκει, καὶ τούτων ἐστὶν ἀγαθὸς κριτής.—Arist. Eth. lib. iii.

⁹ Sine dubio in omnibus statim accusationibus hoc agendum est, ne ad eas libenter descendisse videamur.—*Quint.* xi. 1.

Do we not eagerly search after and greedily embrace all occasions to do it? Is it not a pleasant entertainment to us, to be carping and cavilling at any body we meet, at any thing we see done? Further,

11. He that pretendeth to judge others should himself be innocent; under no indictment, and not liable to condemnation¹. Is it not very improper for a criminal, for one who is not only in truth and in his own conscience guilty, but who standeth actually convicted of heinous offences, to sit upon the bench, determining about the deeds and the states of others? It is the case of us all: we are all notoriously guilty of heinous crimes before God; we all do lie under the sentence of his law²; we do all stand in need of pardon from our Judge, his mercy is our only hope and refuge: and shall we then pretend to be judges, or be passing sentence on our brethren? If only those who are free and guiltless should judge, who could undertake it? There would surely be no more than there appeared then, when in the case of the woman taken in adultery, our Lord propounded the like condition: *‘Ο ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν, he that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her³*: upon which proposition the sequel was, *And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even to the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst*: so, infallibly, should no man be allowed to judge who were not himself void of like guilt, would every man escape censure.

12. Lastly: it is the property of a good judge to proceed with great moderation, equity, candour, and mildness; as a general friend, a friend to justice, to the public, to mankind, to the party impeached. As a friend to justice, he should be careful that the defendant receive no wrong in his credit or interest; as a lover of the public, he should wish that no offences or scandals be found; out of humanity he should

¹ Cum ipse sis reus, in alterum audes ferre sententiam?—*Opt.* 2.

² Ps. cxliii. 2.

³ John viii. 7. 9.

desire that no man may incur the blemish of guilt, or pain of suffering; he should tender the party's case as compassionate, and desire that he may be delivered from the evil threatening him: this should render him willing to acquit and free the party, apt to apprehend and interpret all things favourably, ready to excuse and mollify the business what he can; far from picking faults out of obscure surmises or slender pretences, from aggravating the miscarriages that are detected, from stretching the blame further than it will reach of itself, or making the case worse than it needs must be, from pronouncing a harsh or heavy sentence thereon. He should always be of counsel to the defendant, pleading his cause so far as truth and equity will permit; putting himself in his case, and thence nowise dealing with him more rigorously than he, according to impartial judgment, should in the like case deem it equal that himself should be dealt with: in fine, however the matter in the result may appear to stand, he should avoid rigour and extremity, he should exercise clemency and mercy.

If this course were observed, innumerable causes, which now are severely judged, would never be mentioned, or come under trial, but would presently be cast out; many would soon, after small discussion, be voided; few would pass that extremity of censure, which now, by the cruel asperity of men, they are forced to undergo: for do we not accuse men for things that are no faults? Do we not exaggerate the guilt of petty faults? Do we not insult over great miscarriages with too unmerciful severity, as if they were incorrigible and unpardonable?

Seeing, then, few of us, according to those reasonable qualifications and conditions, are capable of being judges; seeing, if those equal rules were observed, most censures would be discarded; seeing how hard it is for any man, either warrantably to undertake, or uprightly to discharge this office; great reason there is for this precept, most fit it is that we should be forbidden to judge.

So much for the part explicative and directive ; now for the persuasive : and for inducing us to eschew this practice, let us briefly declare the pravity and vanity of it ; the performing which will, I suppose, be sufficient to dissuade and deter us from it. Be pleased only first to note, that some considerations which we shall propound will be applicable to some kind of bad censure, some to another, according to the several defects and incapacities we have to judge lawfully, upon the grounds already touched.

1. Censuring is an impious practice in regard to God.

By taking upon ourselves to judge unduly, without authority, or beyond it, we do invade God's office, setting up ourselves as judges in his room ; we usurp his right, exercising jurisdiction over his subjects, without order and licence from him : it is St. Paul's argument, *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant*⁴ ? that is, how intolerably bold and arrogant, how sacrilegiously injurious and profane art thou, to climb up into God's tribunal, and thence to pronounce doom upon his subjects ?

By rash judgment in matters not subject to our cognizance (as when we pronounce concerning the secret thoughts and intentions of men), we proudly and perversely do arrogate to ourselves the incommunicable perfections of God, who alone can know such things, and determine rightly in such cases ; who therefore hath reserved them to himself, commanding us *to judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come*⁵.

By passing sentence about the state of our neighbour, we do anticipate God's judgment, and by pre-judging strive to frustrate it. We take upon us to *purge his floor*, to sever the chaff from the corn, and the tares from the wheat, to discriminate the goats from the sheep⁶ ; which to perform will be the work of God's infinite wisdom and justice *at the great day*.

⁴ Rom. xiv. 4.

⁵ 1 Cor. iv. 5.

⁶ Matt. iii. 12, 13 ; xxv. 32. *Quantus arrogantiae tumor est, quanta humilitatis ac lenitatis oblivio, arrogantiae suae quanta jacta-*

By censuring our brethren causelessly, for not complying with our conceits, humours, or practices, we lay hold upon and appropriate to ourselves God's legislative power; we subject his law to our fancy and pleasure; we, in effect, condemn his law of error and imperfection; we do at least make ourselves sharers with him in the enacting laws, and dispensing justice. *He* (saith St. James) *that speaketh against his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law*⁷; that is, he opprobriously doth imply the law to be defective, until he doth complete or correct it; making it a guilt not to satisfy his will or conceit, beside the plain intent of the law: the dispensation of justice is not sufficient, unless he partake therein, taxing whom and why he pleaseth; God without him is not a perfect lawgiver or judge.

We are also very ingrateful in not being favourable towards our brethren in judgment; when as God is in his judgment so benign, patient, and merciful toward us, who *is not extreme to mark what we do amiss*; is not forward to seek or find faults, but rather *waiteth to be gracious, hideth his face from our sins, and passeth by our transgressions*; doth not aggravate our offences, but rather doth excuse them, *remembering that we are flesh*; is not glad of occasion to punish, but *delighteth in mercy, and doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men*⁸; is not severe, but *punisheth us less than our iniquities deserve, and in his wrath remembereth mercy*⁹. And are we not impious if we do so ill requite him, and so little resemble him, in being rigorous and harsh toward our brethren, when they offend, or seem to do so?

In fine, censuring is impious, as involving the viola-

tio, ut quis aut audeat aut facere se posse credat, quod nec apostolis concessit Dominus, ut zizania a frumento putet se posse discernere, aut quasi ipsi paleam auferre, et aream purgare concessum sit, paleas conetur a tritico separare?—*Cypr. Ep. 52.*

⁷ James iv. 11.

⁸ Ps. cxxx. 3; Isa. xxx. 18; Ps. li. 9; Mic. vii. 18; Ps. lxxviii. 39; ciii. 14; Lam. iii. 33.

⁹ Ezra ix. 13; Hab. iii. 2.

tion of those **great commandments**, of exercising, in all our demeanour and dealing, humility, meekness, pity, and mercy, toward our brethren; of pursuing and promoting peace among them.

2. Censuring, in respect to our neighbour, is an unjust practice. It is unjust to meddle in affairs with which we have nothing to do; to draw those persons under our jurisdiction who are not subject to it, but are liable to render their account at another bar; to punish those in their reputation or interest, over whom we have no just authority, *who have their own master, to whom they must stand or fall.*

It is most unjust to judge any man without competent means of knowing, or skill to determine his case; to condemn him without diligent trial, without certain proof, without full conviction of his fault; to punish him without just cause, or beyond due measure.

It is very unjust to usurp an interest in the goods which are to our neighbour most proper and dear, his credit and concerns depend thereon, disposing of them as we please, to his disadvantage and prejudice.

It is also very unjust, when as we do need the candid judgment, the forbearance and pardon of others for many things faulty and offensive that we commit, to refuse the like to others¹.

3. Censuring is also a very uncharitable practice, and so contrary to the principal duty of our religion; it is so eminently in all cases wherein it is unjust; for charity doth virtually contain justice, and transcendeth it; it is so peculiarly whenever it is harsh or rigorous, when it is affected, when it is needless or unprofitable; for charity disposeth us to be gentle, meek, patient, and merciful in all our dealings; it engages us to hide and smother, to diminish and excuse, to pass by and pardon offences; *Charity seeketh no evil, it covereth all things, it beareth all things*²; it tendereth our neigh-

¹ ————— æquum est

Peccatis veniam poscentem reddere rursus.—*Hor. Serm. i. 3.*

Det ille veniam facile, cui venia est opus.—*Sen. Tr.*

² 1 Cor. xiii. 5. 7.

bour's good and advantage of all kinds (his credit, his interest, his convenience, and pleasure); it therefore will inflict no more evil than reason and necessity shall indispensably require³.

A censorer is indeed unjust and uncharitable, not only toward those whom he censureth, but also toward those into whom thereby he doth infuse ill-opinion, and ill-will toward their neighbour; he is guilty of their injustice and uncharitableness, a mischief more irreparable than his own.

4. Censuring is a very foolish and vain practice in manifold respects; as arguing great ignorance and inconsiderateness, as producing grievous inconveniences and mischiefs, especially to the practiser of it⁴.

It signifieth that we do not well understand or not well consider the natural impotency and frailty of mankind; how liable others are to mistake and slip, and how prone we ourselves are thereto; how, as St. James saith, *in many things we offend all*⁵; did we observe, or would weigh this, we should not be so forward to censure, or so vehement and bitter in it; we should see failing and tripping in many things to be a common case, rather demanding commiseration than censure.

It implieth also, that we little consider how our escaping any faults, which our neighbour slippeth into, is nowise imputable to any worth or virtue in us, so much as the good providence and merciful grace of God, guarding or rescuing us from them: if we did apprehend and reflect on this, it would appear our duty rather to bless God for our being protected from mis-carriages, than censoriously to insult over those who seem to fall into them. It signifieth we have no sight or sense of our own defects; for did we clearly see, did we humbly resent them, that would damp our heat and earnestness to censure. It declares a fond self-conceit, that we deem ourselves superior to our neigh-

³ Οὕτως ἔχω ἐν τοῖς ἀμφιβόλοις, νεύειν χρῆναι πρὸς τὸ φιλάνθρωπον, καὶ ἀπογινώσκειν μᾶλλον, ἢ καταγινώσκειν τῶν ὑπαιτίων.
—Naz. Or. 21.

⁴ Est proprium stultitiæ aliorum vitia cernere, oblivisci suorum.
—Cic. Tusc. i. ⁵ James iii. 2.

bour in wisdom, and less obnoxious to blame, and therefore fit to be his judges; whereas, according to a sober esteem of ourselves, we should appear more fit to stand at the bar than to sit upon the bench; and should thence more dread the one than affect the other.

It showeth likewise, that we do not rightly conceive the nature, or worthily esteem the consequences of this practice: we know not, or regard not, the value of our neighbour's reputation, which by censure we do mean to ruin or impair: we perhaps by no means would rob him of his substance, or of his life; yet we scruple not by grievous censure to bereave him of his good name; which he, the best prizer of his own goods, may esteem beyond his estate or his life itself: we think it nothing, or a slight matter to carp at him; but he feeleth it very painful, and deeply resenteth it.

It argueth in us an untamed fierceness of mind and discomposedness of passion, which can never consist or cohabit with wisdom; for a well-ordered, calm, and free mind, will be slow in conceiving offence or dislike, moderate in estimating things, reserved in expressing its sentiments, not easily transported into extremity or excess; it consequently will hardly suffer a man to break forth into rash or harsh censure⁶. So many signs and arguments of incogitancy and blindness this practice doth involve.

5. Furthermore, this practice will produce many great inconveniences and mischiefs to us.

1. We do thereby provoke, and in a sort authorize others to requite us in the same kind⁷: for nothing more doth excite the indignation, doth inflame the anger, doth engender the hatred of men toward us, than being pragmatrical in finding fault, and hasty to censure their doings causelessly or immoderately; nothing seeming to them a more certain argument that

⁶ Prov. xii. 16.—“A fool's wrath is presently known; but a prudent man covereth shame.” Prov. xxix. 11.—“A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wise man keepeth it till afterwards.”

⁷ ——— at tibi contra

Evenit, inquirant vitia ut tua rursus et illi.—*Hor.* Sermon. i. 3.

we bear them ill-will, or do condemn them; and if we so vex them, they will in requital be as ready, by finding or making faults in us, to vex and trouble us; it engageth their care, and quickeneth their industry, and whetteth their invention to observe or devise matter of recrimination. Men think it not only lawful, but even needful for them, in their own defence, to disparage the censorer, that his judgment may have the less weight to their prejudice; so that it will infallibly come upon us, as our Lord warneth, using it as an argument to dissuade us from this practice, that, *with what judgment we judge, we shall be judged; and with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again*⁸. Men take it for allowable to retaliate in this way to the height, and stoutly to load the censorious man with censure.

2. We do by this practice not only expose ourselves to censure, but implicitly, and according to ready consequence, do pass it upon ourselves, seeing we seldom, in kind or equivalently, are ourselves clear of that which we charge upon others⁹; with our own weapon of sharp censure, we through another's side do imprudently wound ourselves; and often, as David did in his parley with Nathan¹, adjudge ourselves to capital punishment; so that to any censorious person it may be said, in St. Paul's words, *Wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things*².

3. We do, by censuring others, aggravate our own faults, and deprive them of excuse, and render ourselves incapable of mercy and pardon: for of all men, he that is forward and prone to censure, who is rigorous and severe in judging others, deserveth no favour, nor can reasonably pretend thereto³. *Inexcusable* (saith St. Paul⁴) *art thou, O man, whosoever thou art, that*

⁸ Matt. vii. 2; Luke vi. 37, 38.

⁹ Vid. Chrys. in Matt. Or. 36, p. 249.

¹ 2 Sam. xii.

² Rom. ii. 1.

³ Ὁ πικρῶς τὰ ἀλλότρια ἐξετάζων ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἑαυτὸν πλημμελί-
μασιν οὐδεμιᾶς ἀπολαύσεται συγγνώμης ποτέ.—Chrys. Ἄνδρ. γ'.

⁴ Rom. ii. 1. 3.

judgest; for thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? and, *Μὴ στενάζετε κατ' ἀλλήλων*⁵. *Do not* (saith St. James) *moanfully complain one against another, lest you be condemned; and, He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy*⁶, in his judgment, saith the same Apostle⁷. Which passages imply, that to be unmerciful in this kind, will expose us to the severity of judgment in regard to our offences! or, that if we deal harshly with our brethren now, God will then proceed the more severely toward us, when our great cause doth come under trial.

4. Indeed, censuring others is an argument that we do little mind our own case, or consider to what a dreadful judgment we do stand obnoxious: did we think of that, we should see cause rather to employ our leisure and care in stating our own accounts, than in examining those of others; more advisable it would appear to mind our own case, than to busy ourselves in canvassing and determining the state of our neighbour; finding what great need our actions will have in that day of favourable construction and merciful allowance, we should become candid and mild in reflecting upon the actions of others; we should not be forward to carp at any thing, we should scarce have the heart to condemn any man; this St. Paul seemeth to imply, when he thus argueth: *Why dost thou judge thy brother, or why*

⁵ ——— ἀνθρώπων οἱ πλεῖστοι βραδεῖς μὲν εἰσιν τῶν ἰδίων κριταί, ταχεῖς δὲ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἐξετασταί.—Naz. Or. 26.

Οὕτω τῶν μὲν ἑτέροις ἀμαρτανομένων πικροὶ καθήμεθα δικασταί, τὰς δὲ ἑαυτῶν δοκοὺς παρορῶμεν.—Chrys. ad Demet. tom. vi. Or. 52.

⁶ James v. 9; ii. 13.

⁷ Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως τῶν πεπλημμελημένων ἡμῖν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς κρίσεως τῆς σῆς περὶ ἑτέρων οἷσει τὴν ψῆφον ὁ Θεός.—Chrys. ibid.

Ὡσπερ γὰρ ὁ φιλόανθρωπος, καὶ ἡμερος, καὶ συγγνωμονικὸς ὑποτίμνεται τὸν πλείονα τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων ὄγκον, οὕτως ὁ πικρὸς, καὶ ὕμνος, καὶ ἀπαραιτήτος πολὺ τοῖς οἰκείοις ἀμαρτήμασι προστίθῃσι μέγεθος.—Ibid.

*dost thou set at nought thy brother? We shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ*⁸: that is, why do any of us judge others, seeing we must all be judged ourselves? It is not seemly, it is not expedient, for those who soon must be arraigned, and put to answer for themselves, to be busy in questioning and prejudging others; but rather to spend their care and pains in preparing for their own account⁹.

5. Nothing indeed more causeth us to neglect our own case, nothing more engageth us to leave our own faults unobserved and uncorrected, than this humour¹. It is easy to observe, that as they who are most sparing and gentle in censure are usually most exempt from blame (for that carefully reflecting upon their own infirmities and defects, spending their heat and activity of spirit upon amending their own errors and faults, they have less time, less concernment, less mind, to search out and scan the imperfections and misdemeanours of others; they do find less reason also, and therefore have less will to be fierce or severe toward them), so the most censorious are usually the most stupid in discerning, and most careless in retrenching their own faults². And needs it must be so; for the actions of other men devour their leisure, take up the intention of their spirits, employ the keenness of their passions upon them, so that they cannot and will not attend to themselves; they are so much abroad, they are so very busy elsewhere, that they little know or care what is done at home; while they are *spying* and pulling out *motes from their brother's eye*, they *consider not the beam*

⁸ Rom. xiv. 10.

⁹ Τα ἡμέτερα ἐξετάζωμεν καὶ οὐδένα ἐροῦμεν κακῶς.—Chrys. in 2 Tim. Or. 2.

¹ Οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπον κατηγοροῦντα καὶ τοὺς ἄλλοτρίους πολυπραγμονοῦντα βίου τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιμεληθῆναι ποτε ζωῆς. Τῆς γὰρ σπουδῆς ἀπάσης αὐτῷ εἰς τὴν ἐτέρων πολυπραγμοσύνην ἀναλίσκομένης, ἀνάγκη τὰ αὐτοῦ πάντα ἀπλῶς κείσθαι καὶ ἡμελημένως.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. γ'.

² Vid. Chrys. tom. ii. Or. 42. Sen. de Vit. B. 27. Βραδὺ εἰς ὑπόνοιαν κακοῦ τὸ πρὸς κακίαν δυσκίνητον.—Naz. Orat. 8.

that is in their own eye³, although never so gross and obvious⁴.

6. Hence, I say, it is, that commonly the best men are the most candid and gentle, and they are most apt to blame others who deserve worse themselves; that the sharpest tongues and foulest lives do usually go together; that they who are the strictest judges of their own, are the fairest interpreters of other men's actions; and they who will least pardon others, do most excuse themselves; that they who are strangely acute in descrying other men's faults, are stark blind in discerning their own. Our Saviour, therefore, chargeth such persons with hypocrisy: *Thou hypocrite; first cast the beam out of thine own eye*; implying, that they do but falsely pretend a respect for goodness and zeal against sin, seeing in their own practice they indulge it; that it is indeed rather pride, peevishness, idleness, spleen, or selfish design that acteth them.

7. In fine, the censorious humour, as it argueth ill-nature to be predominant, (a vulturous nature, which easily smelleth out, and hastily flieth toward, and greedily feedeth on carrion,) as it signifieth bad conscience; for he that knoweth evil of himself is most prone to suspect, and most quick to pronounce ill concerning others, so it breedeth and fostereth such ill dispositions; it debaucheth the minds of men, rendering them dim and doltish in apprehending their own faults, negligent and heedless in regard to their own hearts and ways; apt to please and comfort themselves in the evils, real or imaginary, of their neighbours; which to do is a very barbarous and brutish practice.

These considerations may, I hope, suffice to persuade

³ Matt vii. 3, 4.

⁴ Τὸ κακίας ἐλεύθερον, καὶ ὑφορᾶσθαι κακίαν ἀλλότερον.—Naz. Ep. 27.

Ὁ μὲν γὰρ κακὸς τάχιστα ἂν καταγνοίῃ καὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ὁ ἀγαθὸς δὲ οὐδέ τοῦ κακοῦ βραδίως.—Naz. Orat. 21.

Ego mi ignosco, Mænius inquit.

Stultus et improbus hic amor est, dignusque notari.
Hor. Serm. i. 3.

the observance of this precept, by the help of God's grace, to which I commend you, and conclude.

Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON VII.

OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

1 THESS. iv. 11.

“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business ¹.”

As frequently between neighbouring states there do rise dissensions and contests about the just limits of their territories; so doth it frequently happen between virtue and vice, right and wrong, duty and miscarriage in practice; for although the extreme degrees, and even the middle regions, of these things are very distant, yet the borders of them do lie very close together, and are in a manner contiguous; a certain ridge of separation running between them, which commonly, being very narrow, thin, and obscure, it is not easy to discern. So it particularly falleth out in the matter before us, wherein our text is concerned. Duty and offence do nearly confine, and almost indiscernibly differ one from the other; for there are about this case precepts which seem to contradict; there are duties appearing to thwart one another.

St. Paul here biddeth us to be studious or ambitious of quiet; elsewhere he enjoineth us to be earnestly active (to be *σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί*, *not slothful in business* :)² here he would have us to mind our own affairs; elsewhere he prescribeth, that we should *not look every*

¹ Chrys. in 2 Cor. Or. 19.

² Rom. xii. 11.

*man to his own things, but every man also to the things of others*³.

According to the general drift of Scripture, and the tenor of our religion, we are in charity obliged to concern ourselves heartily for the good of our neighbour, and to strive earnestly in promoting it: we are enjoined so far to interpose and meddle in the affairs of others, as to watch over them for their good; to instruct and advise them, to admonish and excite them, to check and reprove them upon occasion; to offer and yield them succour, to compose differences between them; to promote their edification and peace: *Let us* (saith the Apostle to the Hebrews) *consider one another*⁴, *to provoke unto love and to good works. Let us* (saith St. Paul to the Romans) *follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another; and, Exhort yourselves together, and edify one another;—warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak*⁵, saith he to the Thessalonians in this Epistle.

To be zealous and earnest in the maintenance and propagation of truth, of virtue, of piety, is a duty incumbent on us, which implieth care and activity concerning others; that we offer to instruct them; that we enter into contest with them; that we examine their words and actions; that we presume to tax and oppose them⁶.

In fine; our religion doth seem, by the bands of mutual relation, and obligations of charity, so to unite us together, so to endear us to one another and to all men, that all things belonging to our brethren do nearly touch us, and should answerably affect us; so that by intermeddling with any thing relating to their welfare, we can hardly be said to meddle with what doth not concern us.

The condition of things also may seem to require, that we so intermeddle; for the duties and affairs of

³ Phil. ii. 4.

⁴ Κατανοῶμεν ἀλλήλους.

⁵ Heb. x. 24; Rom. xiv. 19; xv. 2; 1 Thess. v. 11. 14.

⁶ Tit. i. 11.

men are so entangled or interwoven, that we can hardly prosecute any concernments of our own, without being engaged in the matters of others: in discharging all offices of society, in pursuance of any traffic or commerce, in all intercourse and conversation, while we transact our own business, we cannot avoid the furthering or obstructing the business of others, who are engaged in the same or contrary designs. Society doth subsist by combinations of care and pain, regarding common interests, so that it seemeth impossible so to mind our own business, as not to meddle with the business of others.

Yet notwithstanding, St. Paul enjoineth us so to affect quiet, as simply to mind our own business, or not to be meddlesome in the concernments of others; for that *doing our own business* is meant exclusively to meddling with the affairs of others, is plain enough by the importance of τὰ ἴδια, which is emphatical, and signifieth only our own, or our proper business; and because it is joined with *being quiet*, which respecteth others, and importeth not stirring beyond our own bounds; to be so meddlesome, being also a practice expressly condemned by St. Peter, in that prohibition, *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as a malefactor, or as a busybody in other men's matters*¹: where pragmatism is, we see, not only forbidden, but is coupled with the most heinous offences.

How then shall we reconcile these things? How shall we in the case sever between the bounds of duty and blame? It is indeed somewhat difficult to do it precisely and with distinctions which shall reach all cases. But somewhat I shall endeavour toward it, by propounding some rules and directions, which should commonly be observed in our dealing and intercourse with others: but first let us a little reflect upon the terms in which the precept is couched.

Study to be quiet. Study; the word is φιλοτιμεῖσθαι,

¹ 1 Pet. iv. 15.

which signifieth to be ambitious, that is, to affect quiet with the like vehemency of desire and care, as men are wont to pursue reputation, dignity, and power, the objects of ambition: the expression containeth a remarkable emphasis, or a grave acumen; for whereas ambition commonly doth prompt men to be restlessly busy, and engageth them in the concerns proper to others, St. Paul biddeth them to be ambitious the contrary way, in affecting quiet, and abstinence from other affairs beside their own.

To be quiet:—This doth signify, not a physical, but a moral rest; not a total forbearance of action; not a fastidious or drowsy listlessness to do any thing; not a senseless indifferency concerning the matters of others; not an absolute sequestering ourselves from common affairs: this is not quiet or tranquillity, the *τὸ ἡσυχάζειν* here, but a naughty sloth, stupidity, or savageness: the quiet here meant is opposed to disorderly motion, to turbulency, to contention, to pragmatistical curiosity, to all such exorbitant behaviour, whereby the right of others is infringed, their peace disturbed, their just interest or welfare anywise prejudiced. This quiet is a calm, steady, regular way of proceeding, within the bounds and measures prescribed by reason, justice and charity, modesty and sobriety; such a motion as the heavenly bodies do keep, which so move that they seem ever to stand still, and never disturb one another: in fine, what a quiet is meant, the subsequent words and the context do show: it followeth,—

And *πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια*, *to do our own business*, or to act things proper and pertinent to us; things which suit to our condition, our station, our vocation; whereby we may discharge our own duties, and supply our own needs; may work benefit to others, or however avoid being anywise burdensome or troublesome to them; an instance of which practice is immediately subjoined; *to work with our own hands—that we may have lack of nothing*⁸; in another place St. Paul calleth

⁸ 2 Thess. iii. 12.

it μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργάζεσθαι, *to work with quiet*, opposing it to περιεργάζεσθαι, being over-busy, or pragmatically curious; and to walking disorderly; that is, beyond the bounds of our calling, or the rules of our duty; so as to encroach upon the rights, or molest the quiet of others.

The words, then, as they do imply an obligation lying upon us to be industrious in our own business, so they chiefly design to prohibit our meddling with the concernments of others; but how to settle the limits between this quiet minding our own business, and a culpable neglect of the duties concerning others; how to distinguish between meddling innocently, from being blameably meddlesome, *hic labor, hoc opus est*; this is that hard task which I am to undertake, but cannot hope thoroughly to perform. However, the method toward it which I shall observe, is this:—First, I shall touch some cases, in which it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others: then I shall propound some general rules, according to which such meddlesomeness is commonly blameable: in the next place, I shall assign some directions proper to some chief and most obvious kinds of meddling: and lastly, offer some considerations to dissuade men from this pragmatistical humour.

1. Superiors may intermeddle with the business of their inferiors (that is, of such as are subject to their care and charge) in all matters relating to the needful execution of their office. Magistrates may inspect the carriage, may examine the doings, may reprehend and punish the offences of their subjects: parents may advise, rebuke, and correct their children: spiritual guides and pastors may admonish and reprove their flock. These things, while with due prudence, equity, and moderation, they perform, they do indeed πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, *do their own business*; it is their proper work, to which God hath designed them, and which reason exacteth of them; they are appointed, to use St. Paul's expression, *to attend continually upon this very thing*;⁹

⁹ Rom. xiii. 6.

and proceedings, therefore, are not to be charged with
~~any~~ pragmatism.

2. In any case, wherein the honour and interest of
~~God~~ is much concerned, we may interpose in vindica-
~~tion~~ and maintenance of them. If any man dareth to
~~blaspheme~~ God's name, we may and ought to stand up
in its defence; if any man disparageth religion, we
~~should~~ strive to clear its repute; if any man impugneth
~~any~~ divine truth of moment, we should endeavour to
~~show~~ it; if any man notoriously transgresseth God's
~~law~~, we may discountenance his presumption, and re-
~~prove~~ him for it: every man in such cases, as God's
~~subject~~, hath not only a commission, but an obligation;
~~is~~ indeed by his allegiance bound to serve God, in main-
taining the honour and interest of his empire: it is
~~an~~ disloyalty, it is pitiful baseness, to forbear meddling
in such cases¹. Thus have good men, without fear or
shame, defended religion and truth against the mightiest
powers and most dangerous oppositions that could be:
thus stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment², not
only checking, but avenging that heinous scandal: thus
Elias maintained the true worship of God against all
the corrupters of it, the kings and whole nation of
Israel: thus the prophets did not forbear to tax the
wicked manners of the princes, the priests, and the
people in their times: thus St. John Baptist did not
stick to reprove king Herod for his unlawful practice:
so our Saviour censured the superstitious and hypo-
critical scribes, and he chastised the profaners of God's
house: so, in fine, the holy apostles resolutely did
assert God's truth against all the world.

3. When the public weal and safety are manifestly
concerned, we may also intermeddle to support or
secure them: so may we rebuke him that slandereth

¹ Κοινόν ἐστὶ τὸ ἔγκλημα, δημόσιον τὸ ἀδίκημα· ἕξεστιν ἐκάστῳ
τῶν βουλομένων κατηγορεῖν.—Chrys. Ἄνδρ. α.

Κὰν ἀκούσης τινὸς ἐν ἀμφοδῷ ἢ ἐν ἀγορᾷ μέση βλασφημοῦντος
τὸν Θεόν, πρόσσελθε, ἐπιτίμησον· κὰν πληγὰς ἐπιθεῖναι δέῃ, μὴ παραι-
τήσῃ, ῥάπισον αὐτοῦ τὴν ὕψιν, σύντριψον αὐτοῦ τὸ στόμα, ἀγιάσον
τὴν χεῖρα διὰ τῆς πληγῆς, &c.—Chrys. ibid.

or reproacheth our prince; we may check him that would break the peace; we may impeach him that violateth the laws, conducing to public welfare: every man is a soldier against traitors and enemies of his country³; every man is born with a commission to defend the public against those which plot its ruin or harm; every man is a party for his prince against rebels, for the church against schismatics, for the law against lawless transgressors, for common peace against those who outrageously disturb it: duty to our superiors, justice and charity to mankind, just regard to our own welfare, allow and oblige us to such meddling.

4. We may also meddle for the succour of right against palpable wrong and outrage: we may help an honest man against a thief assaulting him; we may guard the life of any man against an assassin; we may vindicate the reputation of an innocent person aspersed by a slanderous tongue; as Moses,—*seeing one of his brethren suffer wrong, defended him; and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian*⁴; as the penitent thief rebuked his companion, unjustly railing upon our Saviour⁵: the common interest of justice and charity do not only excuse, but commend meddling in such cases.

5. We may likewise meddle with the proceedings of others, when our own just defence requireth it: we may repel those who attack our safety or peace, who invade or rifle our goods, who traduce our good name; we may endeavour to defeat their plots, and to restrain their violence⁶. This is indeed doing our own business; for to preserve our life with its conveniences and comforts, to maintain our right and just interest, to keep our honour and reputation clear from scandal, is incumbent upon us; we are naturally the patrons, advocates, and guards of those considerable goods assigned or intrusted to us by Providence.

6. When the life, or welfare, either spiritual or temporal, of our neighbour, is deeply concerned, and cannot

³ Tertull.

⁴ Acts vii. 24.

⁵ Luke xxiii. 40.

⁶ Cum moderamine inculpatæ tutelæ.

otherwise than by our aid be supported or relieved, we may lawfully interpose to yield it: if we see him exposing his life to any great hazard, or engaging his soul into any great sin, we may in any fair way (by admonition, advice, reproof, politic device, harmless force,) without any invitation or licence, with or against his will, presume to reclaim or restrain him. We may stop him in his career to ruin or grievous mischief; we may withhold him from running into a snare, or tumbling down a precipice, or drinking in poison; we may, as St. Jude speaketh, *snatch him out of the fire*¹. In such cases we may reasonably suppose, that our neighbour, being himself, will allow us to meddle, or will not be displeased therewith; if he hath not his wits about him, we may supply him with ours in such exigence: his present consent and approbation are not then requisite, he not being in condition to yield them²; he needeth guardians, and opportunity constituteth us in that office: extreme and evident need will not only excuse the liberty we shall assume, but it obligeth us to use our power to save him³; in case of neglect, that surly answer, *Am I my brother's keeper*⁴? will not serve our turn². We may, we should, it is not only innocent, but just and laudable, for us to be watchful over our neighbour's concernment and deportment, if we do it out of pure charity, in a discreet, quiet, and gentle manner.

7. In fine, if any signal opportunity of doing our neighbour any considerable good, especially to his soul, doth offer itself, we may lawfully, we should in charity, embrace it: we may then even obtrude upon him our direction and succour; if he be so blind as not to discern our good will, so peevish as to dislike our

¹ Jude 23, ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς ἀρπάζοντες.

² Invito non tribuitur quodcunque pro eo præstatur.—*Reg. J.*

³ Furiosis nulla voluntas est.—*R. J.*

⁴ Gen. iv. 9.

² Μὴ μοι λέγε τὸ ψυχρὸν τοῦτο ῥῆμα· τί δέ μοι μέλει; οὐδὲν ἔχω κοινὸν πρὸς αὐτὸν, &c.—Vid. Chrys. Ἀνδρ. 1. tom. ii. Or. 59, in Matt. Orat. 77, 78, in Joh. Or. 15, in Eph. Or. 19; Chrys. in Tit. Or. 5, in Heb. Or. 30.

proceeding, so ingrateful as not to thank us for our pains, yet our good intent will justify us before God, and at the bar of reason; and we have, to countenance us therein, the common example of good men, who, for doing thus, have worthily being accounted the friends and benefactors of mankind.

In these and the like cases, we may, without offending, intermeddle : in doing so we may indeed truly be said to be quiet, and to do our own business ; because there is no exorbitancy or disorder in such proceeding, because God's law and sound reason have appropriated these things to us, and made them our concernment. There is no business more proper or pertinent to us, than that wherein we labour to promote the glory of God, or to procure the good of men ; this is the principal design of our being, and therefore employment therein cannot misbecome us : but we must however in such cases take heed that our pretences are real and well grounded, that our proceedings are regular and fair ; we must not take or use such liberty maliciously ; we must never, out of hypocritical pretence to the maintenance of God's honour, of public good, of justice, truth, or peace, be irregularly pragmatical or turbulent : this is to be doubly bad, adding to the irregularity of offence, the wickedness of fraud and malice.

1. We should never, out of ambition, covetous desire, or self-conceit, so meddle as to invade any man's office, or to assume the exercise of it. A private man should not presume to act the prince or the statesman, offering to control those who are not under him, to deliberate, debate, determine, or pass censure about political affairs or occurrences. A layman should not intrude himself to administer the sacred functions of authoritative teaching, of dispensing the Sacraments, of exercising spiritual censures, of defining theological controversies, which are committed to the guides and pastors of the Church. No man should set himself upon the tribunal to judge, or undertake, without licence or invitation, to arbitrate the causes of others : doing thus is to encroach upon God, and to usurp upon

man: we encroach upon God, assuming to ourselves powers not derived from his order, and deserting the station assigned us by his providence; we usurp upon man, exercising authority over him, which he is not bound to stoop unto.

2. We should not, without call or allowance, meddle with our superiors, so as to advise them, to reprehend them, to blame or inveigh against their proceedings; for this is to confound the right order of things, to trespass beyond the bounds of our calling and station, to do wrong, not only to them, but to the public, which is concerned in the upholding their power and respect: it is indeed a worse fault than assuming the ensigns of their dignity, or counterfeiting their stamps; for that is but to borrow the semblance, this is to enjoy the substance, of their authority.

Nothing in this busy and licentious age is more usual, than for private men to invade the office, to exercise the duties, to canvass and control the actions of their superiors; discussing what they ought to do, and prescribing laws to them; taxing what is done by them; murmuring at their decrees, and inveighing against their proceedings: every one is finding holes in the state, and picking quarrels with the conduct of political affairs; every one is reforming and settling the public according to models framed in his own conceit. Things, saith one, are out of order; the constitution is very defective, and ought to be corrected; such a law in all reason should be repealed, and such an one enacted; here our statesmen were out of their politics, and there our lawgivers failed in point of equity or prudence. No, clamours another no less eagerly, all things stand as well as can be; nothing can be amended, or ought to be altered; our establishment in all respects is more perfect than Plato's commonwealth, or the state of Utopia. Thus doth each man appoint himself counsellor of state, and turns legislator, without any call from the king, or choice of the country: every one snatcheth at the sceptre, and invests himself with the senator's robe: every one acteth a prince and a bishop,

or indeed is rather a censor and controller of both orders; not considering the wrong he committeth, nor the arrogance he practiseth, nor the mischiefs which naturally ensue upon such demeanour: for to direct or to check governors is in effect to exautorate or depose them, substituting ourselves in their room: and what greater injury can we do them or the public? To fix or reverse laws belongeth to the highest authority and deepest wisdom, which it is enormous presumption for us to arrogate to ourselves: by attempting such things we confound the ranks of men, and course of things; we ruffle the world, we supplant public tranquillity: and what greater mischief than this can we do among men?

It is the business and duty of those whom God hath constituted his representatives and ministers, to deliberate and conclude what is to be done; and for the due performance of their charge they are accountable to their Master, not to us; *Nobis obsequii gloria relictæ*³; our duty and our privilege (for so it is, if we could understand it, it being far more easy and safe) it is to submit and obey with quiet and patience; if we do more, we are therein irregular, and no less undutiful to God than to our superiors; we forget those divine rules and precepts: *Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say to him, What doest thou? Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. Do all things without murmurings and disputings*⁴. We consider not what judgments are denounced upon those whose character it is *to despise government, to be presumptuous and self-willed, not to be afraid to speak evil of dignities*⁵.

We do not weigh the nature of the things we meddle with, nor the advantages of the persons whom we tax, nor our own incapacity to judge rightly about them. There is a kind of sacredness in the mysteries

³ Tibi summum rerum judicium dii dedere; nobis obsequii gloria relictæ est.—*M. Terent. apud Tac. Ann. V. C.*

⁴ Eccles. viii. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 13. 18; Phil. ii. 14.

⁵ 2 Pet. ii. 10.

of state: as the mysteries of faith do surpass natural reason, so do those of state transcend vulgar capacity: as priests by special grace are qualified best to understand the one, so are princes by like peculiar assistance enabled to penetrate the former. He that employeth them in that great work of governing the world, and maketh them instruments of his providence, is not wanting in affording to them direction and aid needful for the discharge of their duty; whence their judgments of things are somewhat more than human, and their words may with us pass for oracular: *A divine sentence (the wise king said) is in the lips of the king; his mouth transgresseth not in judgment*⁶. According to the ordinary reason of things, they are best able to judge of such things, being, by reason of their eminent station, able to discern more and further than others; having by experience and constant practice acquired a truer insight into things, and a better skill to manage them: whereas we, being placed beneath in a valley, can have no good prospect upon the grounds and causes of their resolutions and proceedings: we, for want of sufficient use and exercise, cannot skill to balance the contrary weights and reasons of things; to surmount the difficulties and rubs, to unfold the knots and intrigues, which occur in affairs of that kind; we cannot expect those special influences of light and strength from heaven toward judging of affairs, which do not properly concern us: wherefore we are altogether incompetent judges, and impertinent dealers about those things; it is great odds, that in so doing we shall mistake and misbehave ourselves; we consequently do vainly and naughtily to meddle with them. If the love of public good doth transport us, let us restrain ourselves.

3. We should not indeed so much as meddle with the affairs of our equals (those I mean not who equal us in dignity or worth, but all such who are not subject to our command or charge, however otherwise inferior to us: those, I say, we should not meddle with), so as

⁶ Prov. xvi. 10.

to control or cross them; to direct, or check, or censure their proceedings against their will, or without special reason engaging us thereto: for this is also to usurp an undue authority, this argueth self-conceit, this containeth immodesty and arrogance.

4. We should not, without the desire or leave of parties concerned, intermeddle in the smaller temporal interests of others, upon pretence to further them, or with design to cross them; for every man should be left to himself to choose and to manage his own business, prosecuting it in the method he best liketh (consistent with law and justice toward others), without interruption or control: every man hath a right to do so, every man desireth it, every man commonly hath a capacity sufficient for it; for each man is apt to study his own business, to weigh his case, to poise his abilities with the circumstances in which he standeth; and thence is likely to get righter notions concerning the state of his affairs, to descry better ways of accomplishing them, than others less regarding them can do: every man is best acquainted with his own humour and temper, and thence can pick his business, and wind the management of it, so that it shall comply with them, or not grate upon them. However, as every man in point of interest and honour is most concerned in the success, and suffereth most by frustration of his endeavours, so it is equal that a free choice of his proceedings should be allowed him, without impediment or disturbance; which enjoying, he will more contentedly bear any disappointment that shall happen. This especially we say, in respect to matters of lesser consequence (such as most worldly interests are), by the ill success whereof our neighbour is not extremely damaged or hurt; for in such cases the immodesty and arrogancy of meddling, with the vexation and trouble it is apt to work, do commonly much outweigh any benefit we can presume by our meddling to procure.

5. We should not, indeed, even in matters of indifferent and innocent nature, so far meddle, as without considerable reason or need to infringe any man's

liberty, to cross his humour, to obstruct his pleasure, however discordant these may be to our judgment and palate. Every man hath a particular gust for diet, for garb, for divertisements and disports (arising from particular complexion, or other unaccountable causes), and fit it is that he should satisfy it; it is enough that what he doeth seemeth good, and relisheth to himself: if we check him therein, we shall seem impertinent and troublesome, and therefore we shall really be so; for it is not our office to be tasters, to be dressers, to be masters of the sports to all men: we in such matters would please our own fancy, and therefore we should not about them offend others; it is incivility, it is injustice, to do it.

6. We should never offer to put a force upon any man's inclination, or strive to bend it unto a compliance with ours; in attempting that we shall commonly be disappointed, and we shall never come fairly off: for some are so tough, they will never yield to us; none will comply against the grain, without regret and displeasure: if you extort a compliance with your desire, you thereby do lose their good opinion and good will; for no man liketh to be overborne with violence or importunity.

7. We should not in conversation meddle so as to impose our opinions and conceits upon others; in conversation with our equals, we have a liberty to propound our judgment, and declare our reasons for it; but if our judgment doth not take, nor our reasons persuade, we should have done; to press further is rude, to be displeased for it is vain, to be angry or violent is unjust; for by the law of conversation every man taketh himself to have an absolute right to use and follow his own reason; and he that affects to deprive any man thereof, will pass for a petty tyrant, a clown, or an idiot. To retain the satisfaction which our own persuasion affordeth, is enough to content a just and sober mind, without triumphing over the understandings of others.

8. We should not ordinarily in converse affect or

undertake to teach ; for this implies a pretence to a kind of superiority, and a preferring ourselves to others in wisdom ; which argueth vanity, and is offensive to those with whom we converse, who care not to be dealt with as disciples or underlings. We may with our equals modestly dispute the case upon even ground, as fellow-students of knowledge, or advocates of truth ; but we must not peremptorily dictate, or pronounce with authority, like masters or judges.

9. We should indeed be cautious of interrupting any man's discourse, or of taking his words out of his mouth⁷ : for this is a rude way of dispossessing men of that which by common law of society they suppose themselves to enjoy, speaking their mind through, and perfecting their discourse ; it is an implicit accusation of impertinency or weakness in their speech ; it is an argument that we deem ourselves wiser than they, or able to speak more to the purpose : it is therefore an unsociable and distasteful practice.

10. We should be careful of intrenching upon any man's modesty in any way, either of commendation or dispraise, so as to put him to the blush, or to expose him unto scorn. Sober men care not to be the subjects of talk ; no man can endure to be the object of sport ; we should not therefore thrust any man upon the stage : it is vexatious, and therefore always discourteous, sometimes very injurious.

11. It is good to be very staunch and cautious of talking about other men and their concernments, in way of passing characters on them, or descanting upon their proceedings for want of other discourse : this is the common refuge of idleness, and the practice of fiddling gossips, who, because they will do nothing themselves, must be reflecting upon the doings of others ; and that they may not say nothing, will talk impertinently : *φλύαροι καὶ περίεργοι*, St. Paul well coupleth together, that is, frivolous *tattlers and busy-bodies* ; and *withal* (saith he of such gossiping women,

⁷ Nec quid agatur in alia domus alia per te noverit.—*Hier. Ep. 2.*

1 Tim. v. 13,) *they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.* To affect talking about others is indeed a great temptation to speaking things which we ought not to speak, words of unjust and uncharitable obloquy⁸.

12. Further; we should not be inquisitive into the designs of men; for this, beside the vain curiosity and impertinency of so doing, is to assail their modesty, and an adventure to vex both them and ourselves: thy neighbour, perhaps, as most advised men are, is desirous to keep his purpose close to himself; then by inquiry thou either forcest him unwillingly to disclose what he would not, or to give thee a repulse, which he liketh not to do⁹; and which whenever he doth, he is displeased: what is pumped out comes up against nature, and bringeth regret with it; and if we cannot get any thing out, we yet cause disturbance within; and ourselves are not well satisfied in the disappointment¹.

13. We should not press into the retirements of men; to do so is not only immodest and rude, but unjust: it is immodest to desire to know from any man what he is ashamed or unwilling to show: it is rude to disturb any man in the enjoyment of his lawful freedom, to interrupt him in his conversation with himself, to obstruct his private satisfactions²: it is unjust to bereave a man of that leisure and opportunity which he possesseth, of doing that which he best liketh, and perhaps is greatly concerned in; of enjoying his own thoughts, of meditating upon his concerns, of examining his ways, of composing his passions, of studying truth, of devotion and intercourse with his God, of contriving and carrying on in anywise the welfare of his own soul. Why doth he retire, but to shun diversion, or that he may be master of his time and thoughts?

⁸ Vid. Chrys. in Heb. x. 32, Orat. 21.

⁹ Percontatorem fugito.

¹ Φιλοπευστία τῶν ἐν ἀποκρύψει.

² Arcanum neque tu scrutaberis ullius unquam,
Commissumque teges, et vino tortus et ira.

Why then are we so unkind, or so unjust, as to deprive him of those contents and advantages?

14. We should not pry or peep into men's secrets: it is a practice upon many accounts blameable.

It is commonly impertinent curiosity; for men hide things, because they do not think others concerned to know them: the concealment argueth their opinion to be such, and consequently that he is fondly curious who would search into them: *Why* (said he well to one, who, seeing him carry a basket covered, did ask what was in it) *dost thou seek to know, when thou seest it covered that thou mayest not know*³?

It is foully discourteous, because offensively depriving men of the satisfaction they take in concealing their matters; encroaching upon the innocent freedoms which they would enjoy, without rendering account to any; trespassing upon their bashfulness, or frustrating their discretion; for therefore men choose to keep things close, because they like not, or judge it not expedient, to declare them. *Take no heed unto all words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servant curse thee*⁴.

It is also grossly injurious to deal thus; for it is a robbery of what is most dear to men, which they with more care reserve and guard, than they do their gold or their jewels: so that to break open the closet of a man's breast, to ransack his mind, to pilfer away his thoughts, his affections, his purposes, may well be deemed a worse sort of burglary or theft, than to break open doors, to rifle trunks, or to pick pockets.

It is a practice in the common opinion of men worthily esteemed very dishonest and treacherous; for men generally do suppose each other to be under a tacit, but well-understood compact, obliged mutually (as they tender greatly the retaining their own secrets, so) to abstain from attempting to discover the secrets of others; to do otherwise is therefore taken for an

³ Τὸ τοῦ Αἰγυπτίου χάριεν πρὸς τὸν ἐρωτῶντα τι φέρει συγκεκάλυμμένον, διὰ τοῦτο συγκεκάλυπται.—Plut. περὶ πολυπρ.

⁴ Eccles. vii. 21.

act of perfidious enmity, and a violation of mutual confidence.

In fine, to peep into chinks, to listen at doors or windows, to mind whispers, to dive into letters and papers, and the like practices, are the practices of insidious eavesdroppers, spies, and sycophants, which common humanity will not endure.

Yea, if the knowledge of what our neighbour would conceal doth casually arrive to us, it is advisable to smother it; it is inhumanity to reveal it to his prejudice. *To reveal secrets*, is a practice condemned in Scripture as odious and base: *He that goeth about as a talebearer, revealeth secrets. A talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter*⁵.

Not to take up, or scatter reports prejudicial. Ecclus. xix. 7. 10⁶.

A wise man would not willingly anywise know the secrets of others, but gladly would shun them, although offering themselves to his knowledge; that he may be freed from the burden of keeping them, and the danger of venting them, to the distaste, wrong, or prejudice of others: and he is commended for his discretion, who, to a prince asking him, *What of his he should impart to him?* replied, *Whatever you please, except your secrets*⁷. Them he well thought unsafe to keep, and dangerous to utter. How foolish, then, is it voluntarily to intrude, or carefully to search into them!

15. We should not lie in wait to surprise or catch any man at advantage, to overthrow him when he trips, to insult upon his mistake or his disaster: to do thus is always ill manners; it is sometimes barbarous inhumanity. Goodness in such cases would dispose a man to support, relieve, and comfort another, if he demandeth, or his case needeth such meddling.

16. Lastly; we should never, at least with much

⁵ Prov. xx. 19; xi. 13.

⁶ Μηδέποτε δευτερώσης λόγον.—Ἀκήκοας λόγον; συναποθανέντω σοι.

⁷ Philippides apud Plut. in Apoph. ad Lysimach. Τινός σοι, εἶπεν, τῶν ἐμῶν μεταδῶ; κακείνος, Οὐ βούλει πλὴν τῶν ἀπορρήτων.

earnestness, meddle with affairs more properly belonging to others, and which we do not, or may not, handsomely pretend to understand so well as others : such are affairs beside our profession, which if we understand not, it is a folly in a peremptory manner to treat of them ; if we do understand them, it is yet indecent to contest or dictate about them, in the presence at least of those who profess them : thus should private men beware, at least in that magisterial or eager way, to meddle with political affairs, illiterate men with scholastical, laymen with theological, unexperienced men with any such matters, the comprehension whereof dependeth upon skill and exercise : no man should be forward to meddle with things extraneous to his way and calling : doing so is wont to create much offence ; it hath usually much immodesty and much folly in it ; often it containeth much injustice.

There are some more general rules concerning the matter in hand : I should now, if time did permit, insist upon some particular kinds of meddling, *advice, reproof, interposing in contests* ; but, in regard to your patience, I shall proceed no further at present.

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SERMON VIII.

OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

1 THESS. iv. 11.

“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business.”

IN a former discourse upon these words I have already showed,—

I. In what cases it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others.

II. Next, I propounded some general rules concerning this matter, according to which we may discern in what cases meddling with the affairs of others is commonly blameable. Thus far I have proceeded.

III. I shall now give some directions concerning particular kinds of meddling. And because they are many, I shall at present only insist upon three (referring others to other occasions): they are, *advice*, *reproof*, *interposing in contests*, and contentions.

I. As to meddling in *advice*, we may do well to observe these directions:—

1. Advise not (except upon call) a superior, or one more eminent than thyself in authority, in dignity, or in age: for he that offereth to advise, doth thereby claim to himself a kind of superiority, or excellence, above another; and it is not well consistent with the reverence and respect due to our betters to seem to do so. They should be wiser than we; at least it becometh us not to declare we think they are not. If

they ask advice, we may without presumption give it, supposing it to be not so much their defect of knowledge as prudent caution, which maketh them willing to hear what any man can say to the case: but to obtrude it on them, argueth we think them to need it, and ourselves able to direct them; which is presumption, and will pass for arrogance.

2. We should not indeed, with any violence or importunity, thrust advice upon our equals, or upon any man not subject to our charge, who is unwilling to receive it: for this is also an exalting ourselves in skill and wisdom above him, and implieth a contemptuous opinion concerning his knowledge; that he is so weak as to need advice; and yet more weak in not seeking it when needful from us: which practice consisteth not with modesty, and needs must breed offence: it is indeed unjust; for every man of right is to be allowed to act by his own advice, and to choose his own counsellors.

3. Be not obstinate in pressing advice; if he that asketh thy counsel do not like it, desist from urging further, and rest content. If thou hast performed the part of a faithful friend, of a good man, of a charitable Christian, in advising what seemeth best to thee, that may abundantly satisfy thee; for the rest, *ipse viderit*, it is his concernment more than thine: if thou pretendest that he must follow thy advice, or art displeased because he doth not so, thou makest thyself a commander, not a counsellor; the which to appoint thee was beside his intention: he meant to seek thy help, not to forfeit his own liberty; and thou art not just in pretending to so much.

4. Affect not to be a counsellor, nor let any considerations, except of friendship, humanity or charity, easily dispose thee to accept the office: it is not worth the while to undertake it as a matter of reputation, or because it seemeth to argue a good opinion concerning thy skill and ability; for it is a critical and dangerous thing to advise, because if the business succeedeth well according to thy advice, the principal usually carrieth

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good terms, this is a laudable meddling, this is a blessed practice. So I leave this particular, and finish the directive part of my discourse.

IV. I shall now further only briefly propose some considerations inducing to quietness, and dissuasive from pragmatism; such as arise from the nature, properties, causes, and effects of each; serving to commend the one, and disparage the other.

1. Consider that quietness is just and equal; pragmatism is injurious. When we contain ourselves quiet, and mind only our own business, we allow every man his right, we harm no man's repute; we keep ourselves within our bounds, and trespass not on the place or interest of our neighbour; we disturb not the right order and course of things: but in being pragmatical we do wrongfully deprive others of their right and liberty to manage their business; we prejudice their credit, implicitly charging them with weakness and incapacity to dispatch their affairs without our direction; we therefore, upon our own unequal and partial judgment, do prefer and advance ourselves above them; we assume to ourselves in many respects more than our due, withdrawing it from others. In fine, no man loveth that others should invade his office, or intrude into his business; therefore, in justice, every man should forbear doing so towards others.

2. Quietness signifieth humility, modesty, and sobriety of mind; that we conceit not ourselves more wise than our neighbour; that we allow every man his share of discretion; that we take others for able and skilful enough to understand and manage their own affairs: but pragmatism argueth much overweening and arrogance; that we take ourselves for the only men of wisdom, at least for more wise than those into whose business we thrust ourselves.

3. Quietness is beneficial to the world, preserving the general order of things, disposing men to keep within their rank and station, and within the sphere of their power and ability, regularly attending to the work and business proper to them; whereby, as themselves do

well, so the public doth thrive; but pragmatikallness disturbeth the world, confounding things, removing the distinction between superior, inferior, and equal, rendering each man's business uncertain; while some undertake that which belongeth not to them, one busybody often, as we find by experience, is able to disturb and pester a whole society.

4. Quietness preserveth concord and amity: for no man is thereby provoked, being suffered undisturbedly to proceed in his course, according to his mind and pleasure: but pragmatikallness breedeth dissensions and feuds: for all men are ready to quarrel with those who offer to control them, or cross them in their way; every man will be zealous in maintaining his privilege of choosing, and acting according to his choice; and cannot but oppose those who attempt to bereave them of it; whence between the busybody assailing, and others defending their liberty, combustions must arise.

5. Quietness, to the person endued with it, or practising it, begetteth tranquillity and peace; for he that letteth others alone, and cometh in no man's way, no man will be apt to disquiet or cross him; he keepeth himself out of broils and factions: but the busybody createth vexation and trouble to himself; others will be ready to molest him in his proceedings, because he disturbeth them in theirs: he that will have a sickle in another's corn, or an oar in every man's boat, no wonder if his fingers be rapped; men do not more naturally brush off flies, which buzz about their ears, sit upon their faces or hands, and sting or tickle them, than they strive to drive away clamorous and encroaching busybodies. *Let (saith St. Peter) none of you suffer as a busybody in other men's matters*¹; it is, he intimateth, a practice whereby a man becometh liable to suffer, or which men are apt to punish soundly: and so the Wise Man, implying the fondness and danger of it, *He (saith he) that passeth by, and meddleth with strife not belonging to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears*²;

¹ 1 Pet. iv. 15.

² Prov. xxvi. 17.

that is, without any probable good effect, he provoketh a creature that will snarl at him and bite him.

6. Quietness is a decent and lovely thing, as signifying good disposition, and producing good effects; but pragmatism is ugly and odious. Every man gladly would be a neighbour to a quiet person, as who by the steady calmness and smoothness of his humour, the in-offensive stillness and sweetness of his demeanour, doth afford all the pleasure of conversation, without any cross or trouble. But no man willingly would dwell by him, who is apt ever to be infesting him by his turbulent humour, his obstreperous talk, his tumultuous and furious carriage; who, upon all occasions, without invitation or consent, will be thrusting in his eyes, his tongue, his hand; prying into all that is done, dictating this or that course, taxing all proceeding, usurping a kind of jurisdiction over him and his actions: no man will like, or can well endure such a neighbour. It is commonly observed, that pride is not only abominable to God, but loathsome to man; and of all prides, this is the most offensive and odious: for the pride which keepeth at home, within a man's heart or fancy, not issuing forth to trouble others, may indeed well be despised, as hugely silly and vain; but that which breaketh out to the disturbance and vexation of others, is hated as molestful and mischievous.

7. Quietness adorneth any profession, bringing credit, respect, and love thereto; but pragmatism is scandalous, and procureth odium to any party or cause: men usually do cloak their pragmatical behaviour with pretences of zeal for public good, or of kindness to some party which they have espoused; but thereby they do really cast reproach, and draw prejudice upon their side: if it be a good cause, they do thereby wrong it, making it to partake of the blame incident to such carriage, as if it did produce or allow disorder; if it be a bad cause, they wrong themselves, aggravating the guilt of their adherence thereto; for it is a less fault to be calm and remiss in an ill way, than busy and violent in promoting it. Nothing hath wrought more

prejudice to religion, or hath brought more disparagement upon truth, than boisterous and unseasonable zeal; pretending in ways of passion, of fierceness, of rudeness to advance them: a quiet sectary doth to most men's fancy appear more lovely, than he that is furiously and factiously orthodox: the ornament of *a meek and quiet spirit is* (saith St. Peter) *in God's sight of great price*³: and it is also very estimable in the opinion of men.

8. Quiet is a safe practice, keeping men not only from needless incumbrances of business, but from the hazards of it, or being charged with its bad success: but pragmatism is dangerous; for if things go ill, the meddler surely will be loaded with the blame⁴: the profit and commendation of prosperities will accrue to the persons immediately concerned; but the disaster and damage will be imputed to those who meddled in the business: to excuse or ease themselves, men will cast the disgrace on those who did project or further the undertaking: he therefore that would be secure, let him be quiet; he that loveth peril and trouble, let him be pragmatical.

9. It is consequently a great point of discretion to be quiet, it yielding a man peace and safety without any trouble: and it is a manifest folly to be pragmatical, it being only with care, pains, and trouble, to seek dissatisfaction to others, and danger to himself; it being also to affect many not only inconveniences, but impossibilities.

Is it possible for any man to grasp or compass an infinity of business? Yet this the pragmatical man seemeth to drive at; for the businesses of other men are infinite, and into that abyss he plungeth himself, who passeth beyond his own bounds; by the same reason that he meddleth with any beside his own, he may undertake all the affairs in the world; so he is

³ 1 Pet. iii. 4.

⁴ Τῷ ὄντι φαίνεται ὁ κατὰ τὴν ἡσυχίαν βίος ἀκίνδυνόν τι καὶ ἀσφαλές ἔχειν.—Chrys. apud Plut.

sure to have work enough, but fruit surely little enough for his pains.

Is it imaginable that we can easily bring others to our bent, or induce men to submit their business to our judgment and humour? Will not he that attempteth such things assuredly expose himself to disappointment and regret? Is it not therefore wisdom to let every man have his own way, and pursue his concerns without any check or control from us?

10. We may also consider, that every man hath business of his own sufficient to employ him, to exercise his mind, to exhaust his care and pains, to take up all his time and leisure⁵. To study his own near concerns, to provide for the necessities and conveniences of his life, to look to the interests of his soul, to be diligent in his calling, to discharge faithfully and carefully all his duties relating to God and man, will abundantly employ a man⁶; well it is, if some of them do not encumber and distract him: he that will set himself with all his might to perform these things, will find enough to do; he need not seek further for work; he need not draw more trouble on him.

Seeing, then, every man hath burden enough on his shoulders, imposed by God and nature, it is vain to take on him more load, by engaging himself in the affairs of others; he will thence be forced, either to shake off his own business, or to become overburdened and oppressed with more than he can bear. It is indeed hence observable, and it needs must happen, that those who meddle with the business of others are wont to neglect their own; they that are much abroad can seldom be at home; they that know others most are least acquainted with themselves: and the wise Hebrew, *The wisdom of a learned man comes by opportunity of leisure* (σοφία σοφιστοῦ ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ σχολῆς), and

⁵ Ὁ πλείστα πράσσει πλείστ' ἀμαρτάνει βροτῶν.—Eurip.

⁶ Ἀπράγμονας εἶναι ἐκκλίνειν γὰρ τὸ καθήκον.—Zenon. apud Laert. Chrysost. tom. ii. Eth. 64.

*he that hath little business shall be wise*⁷ (ὁ ἑλασσοῦμενος πράξει αὐτοῦ σοφισθήσεται). Whence it is scarce possible that a pragmatistical man should be a good man; that is, such an one who honestly and carefully performeth the duties incumbent on him.

Philosophers, therefore, generally have advised men to shun needless occupations, as the certain impediments of a good and happy life; they bid us endeavour ἀπλοῦν ἑαυτοὺς, *to simplify ourselves*, or to get into a condition requiring of us the least that can be to do. St. Paul intended the same when he advised us, μὴ ἐμπλέκεσθαι ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, *not to be entangled in the negotiations of life*⁸: and our Saviour, when he touched Martha for *being troubled about many things*⁹. So far, therefore, we should be from taking in hand the affairs of other men, that we should labour to contract our own, and reduce them to the fewest that we can; otherwise we shall hardly attain wisdom, or be able to perform our duty¹.

11. But suppose us to have much spare time, and to want business, so that we are to seek for divertisement, and must for relief fly to curiosity²; yet it is not advisable to meddle with the affairs of other men; there are divers other ways more innocent, more safe, more pleasant, more advantageous to divert ourselves, and satisfy curiosity³.

Nature offereth herself, and her inexhaustible store of appearances, to our contemplation; we may, without any harm, and with much delight, survey her rich varieties, examine her proceedings, pierce into her secrets. Every kind of animals, of plants, of minerals, of meteors, presenteth matter, wherewith innocently,

⁷ Eccclus. xxxviii. 26.

⁸ 2 Tim. ii. 4.

⁹ Luke x. 41.—*τυρβάζῃ περὶ πολλά.*

¹ Ὁ σοφός, ἰδιοπράγμων, καὶ ἀπράγμων.—Democ. Sen. Ep. 72.
22. Tertullian calleth Stoicism, Quietis magisterium.—*De Pall.* v.

² Tacitus saith of the Stoics' sect,—quæ turbidos et negotiorum appetentes facit.

³ Omnium occupatorum conditio misera est, eorum tamen miserrima, qui ne suis quidem occupationibus laborant.—Sen. *de Brev. Vitæ*, xix.

pleasantly, and profitably to entertain our minds. There are many noble sciences, by applying our minds to the study whereof, we may not only divert them, but improve and cultivate them: the histories of ages past, or relations concerning foreign countries, wherein the manners of men are described, and their actions reported, may afford us useful pleasure and pastime; thereby we may learn as much, and understand the world as well, as by the most curious inquiry into the present actions of men; there we may observe, we may scan, we may tax the proceedings of whom we please, without any danger or offence: there are extant numberless books, wherein the wisest and most ingenious of men have laid open their hearts, and exposed their most secret cogitations unto us; in pursuing them we may sufficiently busy ourselves, and let our idle hours pass gratefully; we may meddle with ourselves, studying our own dispositions, examining our principles and purposes, reflecting on our thoughts, words, and actions; striving thoroughly to understand ourselves: to do this we have an unquestionable right, and by it we shall obtain vast benefit, much greater than we can hope to get by puddering in the designs or doings of others. Pragmaticalness, then, as it is very dangerous and troublesome, so it is perfectly needless; it is a kind of idleness, but of all idleness the most unreasonable⁴: it is at least worse than idleness, in St. Gregory Nazianzen's opinion: for, *I had rather* (said he) *be idle more than I should, than over-busy*⁵. Other considerations might be added; but these, I hope, may be sufficient to restrain this practice, so unprofitable and uneasy to ourselves, and, for the most part, so injurious and troublesome to others.

Now the God of peace make us perfect in every good word and work, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

⁴ Ἀνδρὶ Λυδῷ πράγματα οὐκ ἦν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἐξελθὼν ἐπρίατο.—
Adag. apud Suidam.

⁵ Ἀργὸς εἶναι μᾶλλον τοῦ δέοντος, ἢ περιεργος δέχομαι.—Greg.
Nat. Or. 26.

SERMON IX.

OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

MATT. xxii. 39.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

THE essential goodness of God, and his special benignity towards mankind, are to a considering mind divers ways very apparent ; the frame of the world, and the natural course of things, do with a thousand voices loudly and clearly proclaim them to us ; every sense doth yield us affidavit to that speech of the holy Psalmist, *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord*¹ : we see it in the glorious brightness of the skies, and in the pleasant verdure of the fields ; we taste it in the various delicacies of food, supplied by land and sea ; we smell it in the fragrances of herbs and flowers ; we hear it in the natural music of the woods ; we feel it in the comfortable warmth of heaven, and in the cheering freshness of the air ; we continually do possess and enjoy it in the numberless accommodations of life, presented to us by the bountiful hand of nature.

Of the same goodness we may be well assured by that common Providence which continually doth uphold us in our being, doth opportunely relieve our needs, doth protect us in dangers, and rescue us from imminent mischiefs, doth comport with our infirmities and

¹ Ps. xxxiii. 5 ; cxix. 64.

misdemeanours; the which, in the divine Psalmist's style, *doth hold our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved; doth redeem our life from destruction; doth crown us with loving-kindness and tender mercies*².

The dispensations of grace, in the revelation of heavenly truth, in the overtures of mercy, in the succours of our weakness, in the proposal of glorious rewards, in all the methods and means conducing to our salvation, do afford most admirable proofs and pledges of the same immense benignity.

But in nothing is the divine goodness toward us more illustriously conspicuous, than in the nature and tendency of those laws which God hath been pleased, for the regulation of our lives, to prescribe unto us, all which do palpably evidence his serious desire and provident care of our welfare: so that, in imposing them, he plainly doth not so much exercise his sovereignty over us, as express his kindness toward us; neither do they more clearly declare his will, than demonstrate his good-will to us.

And among all divine precepts this especially, contained in my text, doth argue the wonderful goodness of our heavenly Lawgiver, appearing both in the manner of the proposal, and in the substance of it.

The second (saith our Lord) *is like to it*; that is, to the precept of *loving the Lord our God with all our heart*³: and is not this a mighty argument of immense goodness in God, that he doth in such a manner commend this duty to us, coupling it with our main duty toward him, and requiring us with like earnestness to love our neighbour as to love himself?

He is transcendently amiable for the excellency of his nature: he, by innumerable and inestimable benefits graciously conferred on us, hath deserved our utmost affection; so that naturally there can be no obligation bearing any proportion or considerable semblance to that of loving him: yet hath he in goodness been pleased to create one, and to endue it with that privilege;

² Ps. lxxvi. 9; lvi. 13; ciii. 4; cxlv. 16.

³ Luke x. 27.

making the love of a man (whom we cannot value but for *his* gifts, to whom we can owe nothing but what properly we owe to *him*) no less obligatory, to declare it near as acceptable as the love of himself, to whom we owe all. To him, as the sole author and free donor of all our good, by just correspondence, all our mind and heart, all our strength and endeavour, are due: and reasonably might he engross them to himself, excluding all other beings from any share in them; so that we might be obliged only to fix our thoughts and set our affections on him, only to act directly for his honour and interest; saying with the holy Psalmist, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee*⁴: yet doth he freely please to impart a share of these performances on mankind; yet doth he charge us to place our affection on one another; to place it there, indeed, in a measure so large, that we can hardly imagine a greater; according to a rule, than which none can be devised more complete or certain.

O marvellous condescension! O goodness truly divine, which surpasseth the nature of things, which dispenseth with the highest right, and foregoeth the greatest interest that can be! Doth not God in a sort debase himself, that he might advance us? Doth he not appear to wave his own due, and neglect his own honour, for our advantage? How otherwise could the love of man be capable of any resemblance to the love of God, and not stand at an infinite distance, or in an extreme disparity from it? How otherwise could we be obliged to affect or regard any thing beside the sovereign, the only Goodness? How otherwise could there be any *second* or like to *that first, that great, that peerless command, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*⁵?

This, indeed, is the highest commendation whereof any law is capable: for as to be like God, is the highest praise that can be given to a person; so to resemble the

⁴ Ps. lxxiii. 25.

⁵ Matt. xix. 17; xxii. 37, 38.

divinest law of love to God is the fairest character that can be assigned of a law : the which indeed representeth it to be νόμος βασιλικός, as St. James⁶ calleth it ; that is, a *royal* and sovereign law ; exalted above all others, and bearing a sway on them. St. Paul telleth us, that *the end of the commandment* (or, the main scope of the evangelical doctrine) is *charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned* ; that charity is *the sum* and substance of all other duties, and that *he that loveth another hath fulfilled the whole law* ; that charity is the chief of the theological virtues, and *the prime fruit of the divine Spirit* ; and *the bond of perfection*, which combineth and consummateth all other graces, and the general principle of all our doings⁷. St. Peter enjoineth us, that to all other virtues we *add charity*, as the top and crown of them ; and, *Above all things* (saith he) *have fervent charity among yourselves*⁸. St. John calleth this law, in way of excellence, *the commandment of God* : and our Lord himself claimeth it as his peculiar precept ; *This*, saith he, *is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you : A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another* ; and maketh the observance of it the special cognizance of his followers ; *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another*⁹.

These indeed are lofty commendations thereof, yet all of them may worthily veil to this ; all of them seem verified in virtue of this, because God hath vouchsafed to place this command in so near adjacency to the first great law, conjoining the two tables ; making charity contiguous, and, as it were, commensurate to piety.

It is true, that in many respects charity doth resemble piety ; for it is the most genuine daughter of piety, thence in complexion, in features, in humour, much

⁶ James ii. 8.

⁷ 1 Tim. i. 5 ; Rom. xiii. 8, 9 ; Gal. v. 14 ; 1 Cor. xiii. 13 ; Gal. v. 22 ; Col. iii. 14 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 14.

⁸ 2 Pet. i. 7 ; 1 Pet. iv. 8.

⁹ 1 John iii. 23. 11 ; iv. 21 ; John xv. 12 ; xiii. 34, 35.

favouring its sweet mother: it doth consist in like dispositions and motions of soul; it doth grow from the same roots and principles of benignity, ingenuity, equity, gratitude, planted in our original constitution by the breath of God, and improved in our hearts by the divine *Spirit of love*¹; it produceth the like fruits of beneficence toward others, and of comfort in ourselves; it in like manner doth assimilate us to God, rendering us conformable to his nature, followers of his practice, and partakers of his felicity²: it is of like use and consequence toward the regulation of our practice, and due management of our whole life: in such respects, I say, this law is like to the other; but it is however chiefly so for that God hath pleased to lay so great stress thereon as to make it the other half of our religion and duty; or because, as St. John saith, *This commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also*³; which is to his praise a most pregnant demonstration of his immense goodness toward us.

But no less in the very substance of this duty will the benignity of him that prescribeth it shine forth, displaying itself in the rare beauty and sweetness of it; together with the vast benefit and utility, which it, being observed, will yield to mankind; which will appear by what we may discourse for pressing its observance. But first let us explain it, as it lieth before us expressed in the words of the text, wherein we shall consider two particulars observable: first, the object of the duty; secondly, the qualification annexed to it: the object of it, *our neighbour*; the qualification, *as ourselves*.

I. The object of charity is *our neighbour*; that is (it being understood, as the precept now concerneth us, according to our Lord's exposition, or according to his intent and the tenor of his doctrine), every man, with whom we have to do, or who is capable of our love, especially every Christian.

The Law, as it was given to God's ancient people,

¹ 1 John iv. 7. 11.

² Matt. v. 45; Eph. v. 1, 2.

³ Matt. xxii. 40; 1 John iv. 21.

did openly regard only those among them who were linked together in a holy neighbourhood or society; from which all other men being excluded were deemed strangers and foreigners; (*aliens*, as St. Paul speaketh, *from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise*⁴.) For thus the law runneth in Leviticus: *Thou shalt not bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*⁵; where plainly *Jews* and *neighbours* are terms equivalent; other men being supposed to stand at a distance without the fold or politic enclosure, which God by several ordinances had fenced, to keep that nation unmixed and separate⁶; nor can it be excepted against this notion, that in the same chapter it is enjoined, *But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself*⁷; for by that stranger (as the Jewish masters will interpret it) is meant a *proselyte of righteousness*; or one who, although a stranger by birth, was yet a brother in religion, having voluntarily submitted to their law, being engaged in the same covenant, and thence admitted to the same privileges, as an adopted child of that holy family.

But now, such distinctions of men being voided, and that *wall of partition* demolished, all the world is become one people; subject to the laws of one common Lord⁸; and capable of the mercies purchased by one Redeemer. God's love to mankind did move him to send our Lord into the world, to assume human nature, and therein to become a mediator between God and men⁹. Our Lord's kindness to all his brethren disposed him to undertake their salvation, and to expiate their sins, and *to taste death for every man*; the effect whereof is an universal reconciliation of God to the world, and an union of men together¹.

⁴ Eph. ii. 12.

⁵ Levit. xix. 18.

⁶ Levit. xx. 26. 24; Exod. xxxiii. 16; Deut. vii. 6; xiv. 2.

⁷ Levit. xix. 34. ⁸ Eph. ii. 14; Gal. iii. 28; Acts x. 36.

⁹ Tit. iii. 4; John iii. 16; 1 Tim. ii. 5.

¹ 1 John ii. 2; Heb. ii. 9; 2 Cor. v. 19; Col. i. 20; Eph. i. 10; ii. 13.

Now the blood of Christ hath cemented mankind; the favour of God, embracing all, hath approximated and combined all together; so that now every man is our brother—not only by nature, as derived from the same stock—but by grace, as partaker of the common redemption; now *God desiring the salvation of all men*, and inviting all men to mercy, our duty must be co-extended with God's grace, and our charity must follow that of our Saviour ².

We are therefore now, to all men, that which one Jew was to another; yea, more than such, our Christianity having induced much higher obligations, stricter alliances, and stronger endearments, than were those whereby Judaism did engage its followers to mutual amity. The duties of common humanity (to which our natural frame and sense do incline us, which philosophy recommendeth, and natural religion doth prescribe, being grounded upon our community of nature and cognation of blood, upon apparent equity, upon general convenience and utility,) our religion doth not only enforce and confirm, but enhance and improve; superadding higher instances and faster ties of spiritual relation, reaching in a sort to all men (as being in duty, in design, in remote capacity, our spiritual brethren;) but in especial manner to all Christians, who actually are fellow members of the same holy fraternity, contracted by spiritual regeneration from one heavenly seed, supported by a common faith and hope, strengthened by communion in acts of devotion and charity ³.

Hereon, therefore, are grounded those evangelical commands, explicatory of this law as it now standeth in force; that *as we have opportunity we should do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith*⁴; that *we should abound in love one towards another, and towards all men*; that *we should glorify God in our professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, by liberally distributing to the saints, and to all men*; that *we should follow peace with all men*; should

² 1 Tim. ii. 4; Tit. ii. 11; Col. i. 23.

³ 1 Pet. i. 23; ii. 17.

⁴ Gal. vi. 10.

*be patient toward all men, and gentle toward all men, and show all meekness toward all men*⁵; and ever follow that which is good, both among ourselves and to all men; that we should make supplications, intercessions, and thanksgivings for all men, especially for all saints, or all our fellow Christians; and express moderation, or ingenuity, to all men⁶.

Such is the object of our charity; and thus did our Lord himself expound it, when by a Jewish lawyer being put to resolve this question, *And who is my neighbour*⁷? he did propound a case, or history, whereby he did extort from that Rabbi this confession, that even a Samaritan, discharging a notable office of humanity and mercy to a Jew, did thereby most truly approve himself a good neighbour to him; and, consequently, that reciprocal performances of such offices were due from a Jew to a Samaritan; whence it might appear, that this relation of neighbourhood is universal and unlimited⁸. So much for the object.

II. As for the qualification annexed and couched in those words, *as thyself*; that, as I conceive, may import both a rule declaring the nature, and a measure determining the quantity, of that love which is due from us to our neighbour; the comparative term *as* implying both conformity or similitude, and commensuration or equality⁹.

1. Loving our neighbour *as ourselves*, doth import a rule, directing what kind of love we should bear and exercise toward him; or informing us that our charity doth consist in having the same affections of soul, and in performing the same acts of beneficence toward him, as we are ready by inclination, as we are wont in practice, to have or to perform toward ourselves, with full

⁵ 1 Thess. iii. 12; 2 Cor. ix. 12, 13.

⁶ Heb. xii. 24; 1 Thess. v. 14; Tit. iii. 2; 1 Thess. v. 15. *ἡπιον εἶναι πρὸς πάντας.* 2 Tim. ii. 24; 1 Tim. ii. 1; Eph. vi. 18; Phil. iv. 5.

⁷ Luke x. 29.

⁸ Πλησίον δὲ ἀνθρώπου οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ τὸ ὁμοιοπαθὲς καὶ λογικὸν ζῶον, &c.—Just. Mart. contr. Tryph. p. 320.

⁹ Ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς φιλίας τῇ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ὁμοιοῦται.—Arist. Eth. ix. 4.

approbation of our judgment and conscience, apprehending it just and reasonable so to do.

We cannot indeed better understand the nature of this duty, than by reflecting on the motions of our own heart, and observing the course of our demeanour toward ourselves; for thence infallibly we may be assured how we should stand affected, and how we should behave ourselves toward others.

This is a peculiar advantage of this rule (inferring the excellent wisdom and goodness of him who framed it), that by it very easily and certainly we may discern all the specialities of our duty, without looking abroad or having recourse to external instructions¹; so that by it we may be perfect lawgivers, and skilful judges, and faithful monitors to ourselves of what in any case we should do: for every one by internal experience knoweth what it is to love himself, every one is conscious how he useth to treat himself; each one consequently can prescribe and decide for himself, what he ought to do toward his neighbour: so that we are not only Θεοδιδάκτοι, *taught of God*, as the Apostle saith, *to love one another*; but αὐτοδιδάκτοι, *taught of ourselves* to exercise that duty: whence our Lord elsewhere doth propose the law of charity in these terms, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets*²; that is, unto this rule all the special precepts of charity proposed in holy Scripture may be reduced.

Wherefore, for information concerning our duty in each case and circumstance, we need only thus to consult and interrogate ourselves, hence forming resolutions concerning our practice.

Do we not much esteem and set by ourselves? Do we not strive to maintain in our minds a good opinion of ourselves? Can any mischances befalling us, any

¹ Οὐ χρεία πολλῶν λόγων, οὐδὲ μακροτέρων νόμων, οὐδὲ διδασκαλίας ποικίλης· τὸ θέλημά σου γινέσθω νόμος—σὺ γένον δικαστής, σὺ γένον νομοθέτης τῆς σεαυτοῦ ζωῆς.—Chrys. Ἄνδρ. ε' γ'.

² 1 Thess. iv. 9; Matt. vii. 12; Luke vi. 31. Ὁ μισεῖς μηδεὶν ἐκ ποιήσης. Tob. iv. 15; Const. Apost. i. 1.

defects observable in us, any faults committed by us, induce us to slight or despise ourselves?—This may teach us what regard and value we should ever preserve for our neighbour.

Do we not sincerely and earnestly desire our own welfare and advantage in every kind? Do we not heartily wish good success to our own designs and undertakings? Are we unconcerned or coldly affected in any case touching our own safety, our estate, our credit, our satisfaction or pleasure? Do we not especially, if we rightly understand ourselves, desire the health and happiness of our souls?—This doth inform us what we should wish and covet for our neighbour¹.

Have we not a sensible delight and complacency in our own prosperity? Do we ever repine at any advantages accruing to our person or condition? Are we not extremely glad to find ourselves thriving and flourishing in wealth, in reputation, in any accommodation or ornament of our state? Especially, if we be sober and wise, doth not our spiritual proficiency and improvement in virtue yield joyous satisfaction to us? Are we not much comforted in apprehending ourselves to proceed in a hopeful way toward everlasting felicity?—This may instruct us what content we should feel in our neighbour's prosperity, both temporal and spiritual.

Do we not seriously grieve at our own disasters and disappointments? Are we not in sad dumps, whenever we incur any damage or disgrace? Do not our diseases and pains sorely afflict us? Do we not pity and bemoan ourselves in any want, calamity, or distress? Can we especially, if we are ourselves, without grievous displeasure apprehend ourselves enslaved to sin and Satan, destitute of God's favour, exposed to endless misery?—Hence may we learn how we should condole and commiserate the misfortunes of our neighbour.

Do we not eagerly prosecute our own concerns?

¹ Ὁ τὸν πλησίον ὡς ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπῶν, ἀπερ αὐτῷ βούλεται ἀγαθὰ, ἀγαθὰ καὶ ἐκείνῳ βουλήσεται, &c.—Just. Mart. contr. Tryph. p. 321,

Do we not with huge vigour and industry strive to acquire all conveniences and comforts to ourselves, to rid ourselves of all wants and molestations? Is our solicitous care or painful endeavour ever wanting toward the support and succour of ourselves in any of our needs? Are we satisfied in merely wishing ourselves well? are we not also busy and active in procuring what we affect? Especially, if we are well advised, do we not effectually provide for the weal of our soul, and supply of our spiritual necessities; labouring to rescue ourselves from ignorance and error, from the tyranny of sin, from the torture of a bad conscience, from the danger of hell?—This showeth how ready we should be really to further our neighbour's good, ministering to him all kinds of assistance and relief suitable to his needs, both corporal and spiritual.

Are we so proud or nice, that we disdain to yield attendance or service needful for our own sustenance or convenience? do we not indeed gladly perform the meanest and most sordid offices for ourselves?—This declareth how condescensive we should be in helping our neighbour, how ready even *to wash his feet* when occasion doth require.

Do we love to vex ourselves, or cross our own humour? do we not rather seek by all means to please and gratify ourselves?—This may warn us how innocent and inoffensive, how compliant and complacent, we should be in our behaviour toward others; endeavouring *to please them in all things, especially for their good to edification* ⁴.

Are we easily angry with ourselves, do we retain implacable grudges against ourselves, or do we execute upon ourselves mischievous revenge? are we not rather very meek and patient toward ourselves, mildly comporting with our own great weaknesses, our troublesome humours, our impertinencies and follies; readily forgiving ourselves the most heinous offences, neglects, affronts, injuries, and outrages committed by us against

⁴ Rom. xv. 2.

our own interest, honour, and welfare?—Hence may we derive lessons of meekness and patience, to be exercised toward our neighbour, in bearing his infirmities and miscarriages, in remitting any wrongs or discourtesies received from him.

Are we apt to be rude in our deportment, harsh in our language, or rigorous in our dealing toward ourselves? do we not rather in word and deed treat ourselves very softly, very indulgently? Do we use to pry for faults, or to pick quarrels with ourselves, to carp at any thing said or done by us, rashly or upon slight grounds to charge blame on ourselves, to lay heavy censures on our actions, to make foul constructions of our words, to blazon our defects, or aggravate our failings? do we not rather connive at and conceal our blemishes? do we not excuse and extenuate our own crimes?

Can we find in our hearts to frame virulent invectives, or to dart bitter taunts and scoffs against ourselves; to murder our own credit by slander, to blast it by detraction, to maim it by reproach, to prostitute it to be deflowered by jeering and scurrilous abuse? are we not rather very jealous of our reputation, and studious to preserve it, as a precious ornament, a main fence, an useful instrument of our welfare?

Do we delight to report, or like to hear ill stories of ourselves? do we not rather endeavour all we can to stifle them; to tie the tongues and stop the ears of men against them?—Hence may we be acquainted how civil and courteous in our behaviour, how fair and ingenuous in our dealing, how candid and mild in our judgment or censure, we should be toward our neighbour; how very tender and careful we should be of anywise wronging or hurting his fame.

Thus reflecting on ourselves, and making our practice toward ourselves the pattern of our dealing with others, we shall not fail to discharge what is prescribed to us in this law: and so we have here a rule of charity.

But further,

2. Loving our neighbour as ourselves doth also

import the measure of our love toward him; that it should be commensurate and equal in degree to that love which we bear and exercise toward ourselves. St. Peter once and again doth exhort us *to love one another* ἑκτενῶς, *with an outstretched affection*⁵: and how far that affection should be stretched, we are here informed; even that it should reach the furthest that can be, or to a parity with that intense love which we do bear in heart, and express in performance, toward ourselves: so that we do either bring down our self-love to such a moderation, or raise up our charity to such a fervency, that both come to be adjusted in the same even level. This is that pitch at which we should aim and aspire; this is that perfection of charity which our Lord recommendeth to us in that injunction, *Be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect*⁶.

That this sense of the words is included, yea, chiefly intended, divers reasons will evince: For,

1. The most natural signification and common use of the phrase doth import thus much; and any one at first hearing would so understand the words.

2. It appeareth by comparing this precept with that to which it is annexed, *of loving God with all our heart and all our soul*; which manifestly designeth the quantity and degree of that love: consequently the like determination is intended in this precept, which is expressed to resemble that, or designed in like manner to qualify and bound our duty toward our neighbour.

3. If the law doth not signify thus much, it doth hardly signify any thing; not at least any thing of direction or use to us: for no man is ignorant that he is obliged to love his neighbour; but how far that love must extend, is the point wherein most of us do need to be resolved, and without satisfaction in which we shall hardly do any thing: for as he that oweth money will not pay except he can tell how much it is; so to

⁵ 1 Pet. i. 22; iv. 8.

⁶ Matt. v. 48.

know the duty will not avail toward effectual observance of it, if its measure be not fixed.

4. Indeed, the law otherwise understood will rather be apt to misguide than to direct us; inducing us to apprehend that we shall satisfy its intent, and sufficiently discharge our duty, by practising charity in any low degree or mean instance. Also,

5. The former sense, which is unquestionable, doth infer and establish this; because similitude of love, morally speaking, cannot consist with inequality thereof: for if in considerable degrees we love ourselves more than others, assuredly we shall fail both in exerting such internal acts of affection, and in performing such external offices of kindness toward them, as we do exert and perform in regard to ourselves; whence this law, taken merely as a rule, demanding a confused and imperfect similitude of practice, will have no clear obligation or certain efficacy.

6. But further to assure this exposition, I shall declare that the duty thus interpreted is agreeable to reason, and may justly be required of us, upon considerations which together will serve to press the observance of it according to such measure.

1. It is reasonable that we should thus love our neighbour as ourselves, because he is as ourselves, or really in all considerable respects the same with us: we concur with him in all that is necessary, substantial, and stable; we differ from him only in things contingent, circumstantial, and variable; in the which, of course or by chance, we are liable in a small time as much to differ from ourselves: in such respects we are not the same to-day that we were yesterday, and shall be to-morrow; for we shift our circumstances as we do our clothes; our bodies are in continual flux, and our souls do much conform to their alteration; our temper and complexion do vary with our air, our diet, our conversation, our fortunes, our age; our parts grow and decay, our principles and judgments, our affections and desires, are never fixed, and seldom rest long in

the same place; all our outward state doth easily change face: so that if we consider the same person in youth and in age, in health and in sickness, in prosperity and in distress, may we not say, *quantum mutatus ab illo*; how quite another man is he grown! Yet shall a man for such alterations surcease or abate his love to himself?—Why, then, in regard to the like differences, shall we less affect our neighbour, who is endowed with that common nature, which alone through all those vicissitudes sticketh fast in us; who is the most express image of us (or rather a copy, drawn by the same hand, of the same original), another self, attired in a diverse garb of circumstances? Do we not, so far as we despise or disaffect him, by consequence slight or hate ourselves; seeing (except bare personality, or I know not what metaphysical identity) there is nothing in him different from what is, or what may be, in us?

2. It is just that we should love our neighbour equally with ourselves, because he really no less deserveth love, or because upon a fair judgment he will appear equally amiable. Justice is impartial, and regardeth things as they are in themselves, abstracting from their relation to this or that person; whence, if our neighbour seem worthy of affection no less than we, it demandeth that accordingly we should love him no less.

And what ground can there be of loving ourselves, which may not as well be found in others? Is it endowments of nature, is it accomplishments of knowledge, is it ornaments of virtue, is it accoutrements of fortune? But is not our neighbour possessed of the same? is he not at least capable of them, the collation and acquist of them depending on the same arbitrary bounty of God, or upon faculties and means commonly dispensed to all? May not any man at least be as wise and as good as we?—Why then should we not

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 6, 7.

esteem, why not affect him as much? Doth relation to us alter the case? is self as self lovely or valuable? doth that respect lend any worth or price to things?

Likewise, what more can justice find in our neighbour to obstruct or depress our love, than it may observe in ourselves? Hath he greater infirmities or defects, is he more liable to errors and miscarriages, is he guilty of worse faults than we? If without arrogance and vanity we cannot affirm this, then are we as unworthy of love as he can be; and refusing any degree thereof to him, we may as reasonably withdraw the same from ourselves.

3. It is fit that we should be obliged to love our neighbour equally with ourselves, because all charity beneath self-love is defective, and all self-love above charity is excessive.

It is an imperfect charity which doth not respect our neighbour according to his utmost merit and worth, which doth not heartily desire his good, which doth not earnestly promote his advantage in every kind, according to our ability and opportunity: and what beyond this can we do for ourselves?

If in kind or degree we transcend this, it is not virtuous love or true friendship to ourselves, but a vain fondness or perverse dotage; proceeding from inordinate dispositions of soul, grounded on foolish conceits, begetting foul qualities and practices; envy, strife, ambition, avarice, and the like.

4. Equity requireth that we should love our neighbour to this degree, because we are apt to claim the same measure of love from others. No mean respect or slight affection will satisfy us; we cannot brook the least disregard or coldness; to love us a little, is all one to us as not to love us at all: it is therefore equitable that we should be engaged to the same height of charity toward others; otherwise we should be allowed in our dealings to use double weights and measures, which is plain iniquity: what indeed can be more ridiculously absurd, than that we should pretend to

receive that from others, which we are not disposed to yield to them upon the same ground and title^{*}?

5. It is needful that so great a charity should be prescribed, because none inferior thereto will reach divers weighty ends designed in this law; namely, the general convenience and comfort of our lives in mutual society and intercourse: for if in considerable degree we do affect ourselves beyond others, we shall be continually bickering and clashing with them about points of interest and credit; scrambling with them for what may be had, and clambering to get over them in power and dignity: whence all the passions annoying our souls, and all the mischiefs disturbing our lives, must needs ensue.

6. That entire love which we owe to God our Creator, and to Christ our Redeemer, doth exact from us no less a measure of charity than this: for seeing they have so clearly demonstrated themselves to bear an immense love to men, and have charged us therein to imitate them; it becometh us, in conformity, in duty, in gratitude to them, to bear the highest we can, that is, the same as we bear to ourselves: for how can we love God enough, or with all our soul, if we do not accord with him in loving his friends and relations, his servants, his children, with most entire affection?

If in God's judgment they are equal to us, if in his affection and care they have an equal share, if he in all his dealings is indifferent and impartial toward all; how can our judgment, our affection, our behaviour, be right, if they do not conspire with him in the same measures?

7. Indeed the whole tenor and genius of our religion do imply obligation to this pitch of charity, upon various accounts.

It representeth all worldly goods and matters of private interest as very inconsiderable and unworthy of our affection, thereby subtracting the fuel of immoderate self-love.

It enjoyneth us for all our particular concerns entirely

^{*} Prov. xx. 10.

to rely upon Providence; so barring solicitude for ourselves, and disposing an equal care for others.

It declareth every man so weak, so vile, so wretched, so guilty of sin and subject to misery (so for all good wholly indebted to the pure grace and mercy of God), that no man can have reason to dote on himself, or to prefer himself before others: we need not cark, or prog, or scrape for ourselves, being assured that God sufficiently careth for us.

In its account the fruits and recompenses of love to others in advantage to ourselves do far surpass all present interests and enjoyments: whence in effect the more or less we love others, answerably the more or less we love ourselves; so that charity and self-love become coincident, and both run together evenly in one channel.

It recommendeth to us the imitation of God's love and bounty; which are absolutely pure, without any regard, any capacity of benefit redounding to himself⁹.

It commandeth us heartily to love even our bitterest enemies and most cruel persecutors; which cannot be performed without a proportionable abatement of self-love.

It chargeth us not only freely to impart our substance, but willingly to expose our lives, for the good of our brethren¹: in which case charity doth plainly match self-love; for what hath a man more dear or precious than his life to lay out for himself?

It representeth all men (considering their divine extraction, and being formed after God's image; their designation for eternal glory and happiness, their partaking of the common redemption by the undertakings and sufferings of Christ, their being objects of God's tender affection and care) so very considerable, that no regard beneath the highest will befit them.

It also declareth us so nearly allied to them, and so greatly concerned in their good (we being *all one in Christ*, and *members one of another*), that we ought to

⁹ Matt. v. 45.

¹ 1 John iii. 16.

have a perfect complacency in their welfare, and a sympathy in their adversity, as our own².

It condemneth self-love, self-pleasing, self-seeking, as great faults; which yet (even in the highest excess) do not seem absolutely bad³; or otherwise culpable, than as including partiality, or detracting from that equal measure of charity which we owe to others: for surely we cannot love ourselves too much, if we love others equally with ourselves; we cannot seek our own good excessively, if with the same earnestness we seek the good of others.

It exhibiteth supernatural aids of grace, and conferreth that holy spirit of love, which can serve to no meaner purposes, than to quell that sorry principle of niggardly selfishness, to which corrupt nature doth incline; and to enlarge our hearts to this divine extent of goodness.

8. Lastly, many conspicuous examples, proposed for our direction in this kind of practice, do imply this degree of charity to be required of us.

It may be objected to our discourse, that the duty thus understood is unpracticable, nature violently swaying to those degrees of self-love which charity can nowise reach. This exception (would time permit) I should assoil, by showing how far, and by what means, we may attain to such a practice (how at least, by aiming at this top of perfection, we may ascend nearer and nearer thereto): in the mean time, experience doth sufficiently evince possibility; and assuredly that may be done, which we see done before us. And so it is, pure charity hath been the root of such affections and such performances (recorded by indubitable testimony) toward others, which hardly any man can exceed in regard to himself: nor indeed hath there scarce ever appeared any heroical virtue or memorable piety, whereof charity, overbearing selfishness, and sacrificing

² Gal. iii. 28; John xvii. 21; Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 26; John xiii. 35.

³ 2 Tim. iii. 2; 2 Pet. ii. 10; Rom. xv. 1; Phil. ii. 4; 1 Cor. x. 24; xiii. 5.

private interest to public benefit, hath not been a main ingredient. For instance, then,

Did not Abraham even prefer the good of others before his own, when he gladly did quit his country, patrimony, friends, and kindred, to pass his days in a wandering pilgrimage, upon no other encouragement than an overture of blessing on his posterity?

Did not the charity of Moses stretch thus far, when for the sake of his brethren he voluntarily did exchange the splendours and delights of a court for a condition of vagrancy and servility⁴; *choosing rather, as the apostle speaketh, to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin*⁵? did not it overstretch, when (although having been grievously affronted by them) he wished that rather his name should be *expunged from God's book*, than that their sin should abide unpardoned⁶?

Did not Samuel exercise such a charity, when being ingratiously and injuriously dismounted from his authority, he did yet retain toward that people a zealous desire of their welfare, *not ceasing earnestly to pray for them*⁷?

Did not Jonathan love David equally with himself, when for his sake he chose to incur the displeasure of his father and his king⁸; when for his advantage he was content to forfeit the privilege of his birth, and the inheritance of a crown; when he could without envy or grudge look on the growing prosperity of his supplanter, could heartily wish his safety, could effectually protect it, could purchase it to him with his own great danger and trouble; when he, that in gallantry of courage and virtue did yield to none, was yet willing to become inferior to one born his subject, one raised from the dust, one *taken from a sheepcote*; so that unrepiningly and without disdain he could say, *Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee*?

⁴ Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxv. in Eph. Or. vii. ⁵ Heb. xi. 24.

⁶ Exod. xxxii. 32.—Βούλομαι μετ' ἐκείνων ἀπολέσθαι, ἢ χωρὶς ἐκείνων σώζεσθαι ὄντως μανία, ὄντως ἔρως μέγας.—Chrys. in Eph. Or. vii. ⁷ 1 Sam. xii. 23. ⁸ 1 Sam. xx. 30.

—are not these pregnant evidences, that it was truly said in the story, *The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul* ^o ?

Did not the Psalmist competently practise this duty, when in the sickness of his ingrateful adversaries *he clothed himself with sackcloth, he humbled his soul with fasting; he bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother* ¹ ?

Were not Elias, Jeremy, and other prophets, as much concerned for the good of their countrymen as for their own, when they took such pains, when they ran such hazards, when they endured such hardships, not only for them, but from them; being requited with hatred and misusage for endeavouring to reclaim them from sin, and stop them from ruin?

May not the holy apostles seem to have loved mankind beyond themselves, when for its instruction and reformation, for reconciling it to God, and procuring its salvation, they gladly did undertake and undergo so many rough difficulties, so many formidable dangers, such irksome pains and troubles, such extreme wants and losses, such grievous ignominies and disgraces; slighting all concerns of their own, and relinquishing whatever was most dear to them (their safety, their liberty, their ease, their estate, their reputation, their pleasure, their very blood and breath) for the welfare of others; even of those who did spitefully malign and cruelly abuse them?

Survey but the life of one among them; mark the wearisome travels he underwent over all the earth, the solicitous cares which did possess his mind *for all the churches*; the continual toils and drudgeries sustained by him in preaching by word and writing, in visiting, in admonishing, in all pastoral employments; the imprisonments, the stripes, the reproaches, the oppositions and persecutions of every kind, and from all sorts of people, which he suffered; the pinching wants, the desperate hazards, the lamentable distresses, with the

^o Ps. lxxviii. 70; 1 Sam. xxiii. 17; xviii. 1; xx. 17.

¹ Ps. xxxv. 12.

which he did ever conflict²: peruse those black catalogues of his afflictions registered by himself: then tell me how much his charity was inferior to his self-love? Did not at least the one vie with the other, when he, for the benefit of his disciples, was content *to be absent from the Lord*³, or suspended from a certain fruition of glorious beatitude; resting in this uncomfortable state, in *this fleshly tabernacle*, wherein *he groaned, being burdened*⁴, and longing for enlargement? Did he not somewhat beyond himself love those men, for whose salvation he wished himself *accursed from Christ*, or debarred from the assured enjoyment of eternal felicity⁵; those very men by whom he had been stoned, had been scourged, had been often beaten to extremity, from whom he had received manifold indignities and outrages?

Did not they love their neighbours as themselves, who sold their possessions, and distributed the prices of them for relief of their indigent brethren⁶? Did not most of the ancient saints and fathers mount near the top of this duty, of whom it is by unquestionable records testified, that they did freely bestow all their private estate and substance on the poor, devoting themselves to the service of God and edification of his people? Finally,

Did not the Lord himself in our nature exemplify this duty, yea by his practice far outdo his precept? For, he who from the brightest glories, from the immense riches, from the ineffable joys and felicities of his celestial kingdom, did willingly stoop down to assume the garb of a servant, to be clothed with the infirmities of flesh, to become *a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief*; he who for our sake vouchsafed to live in extreme penury and disgrace, to feel hard want, sore travail, bitter persecution, most grievous shame and anguish; he who not only did contentedly bear,

² 2 Cor. xi. 23; iv. 8; 1 Cor. iv. 11.

³ Phil. i. 24.

⁴ 2 Cor. v. 1, &c.

⁵ Rom. ix. 3; 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25; 1 Thess. ii. 15.

⁶ Acts iv. 34.

but purposely did choose to be accused, to be slandered, to be reviled, to be mocked, to be tortured, to pour forth his heart-blood upon a cross, for the sake of an unprofitable, an unworthy, an impious, an ingrateful generation; for the salvation of his open enemies, of base apostates, of perverse rebels, of villanous traitors⁷; he who, in the height of his mortal agonies, did sue for the pardon of his cruel murderers; who did send his apostles to them, did cause so many wonders to be done before them, did furnish all means requisite to convert and save them: he that acted and suffered all this, and more than can be expressed, with perfect frankness and good will⁸; did he not signally love his neighbour as himself, to the utmost measure? did not in him virtue conquer nature, and charity triumph over self-love? This he did to seal and impress his doctrine; to show us what we should do, and what we can do by his grace; to oblige us and to encourage us unto a conformity with him in this respect; for, *Walk in love, saith the apostle, as Christ hath also loved us, and hath given himself for us*; and *This* (saith he himself) *is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you*⁹: and how can I better conclude, than in the recommendation of such an example?

*Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work*¹.

⁷ Rom. v. 6. 8. 10; 1 Pet. iii. 18; Eph. ii. 1; Col. ii. 13. Chrys. in Eph. Or. vii. in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii.

⁸ Heb. xii. 2.

⁹ Eph. v. 1; 1 John iii. 16; John xv. 12; xiii. 34.

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 16.

SERMON X.

THE NATURE, PROPERTIES, AND ACTS OF CHARITY.

EPHES. v. 2.

“And walk in love.”

ST. PAUL telleth us, that *the end of the commandment* (or the main scope of the evangelical doctrine) *is charity, out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned*¹; that charity is a general principle of all good practice (*let all your things be done in charity*); that is the sum and abridgment of all other duties, so that he *that loveth another hath fulfilled the whole law*²; that is *the chief* of the theological virtues; the *prime fruit of the divine Spirit*, and *the band of perfection*, which combineth and consummateth all other graces³.

St. Peter enjoineth us, that to all other virtues we should add charity, as the top and crown of them; and, *Above all things* (saith he) *have fervent charity among yourselves*⁴.

St. James styleth the law of charity, νόμον βασιλικόν, *the royal, or sovereign law*⁵.

St. John calleth it, in way of excellence, *the com-*

¹ 1 Tim. i. 5.

² 1 Cor. xvi. 14; Gal. v. 14; Rom. xiii. 8, 9.

³ 1 Cor. xiii. 13; Gal. v. 22; Col. iii. 14.

⁴ 2 Pet. i. 7; 1 Pet. iv. 8.

⁵ James ii. 8.

*mandment of God; This is his commandment, that we should love one another*⁶.

Our Lord claimeth it for his peculiar law: *This is my commandment*; and, *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another*. And he maketh the observance of it the special badge and cognizance of his followers: *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another*⁷.

It being therefore a duty of so grand importance, it is most requisite that we should well understand it, and faithfully observe it; to which purposes I shall, by God's assistance, endeavour to confer somewhat, first by explaining its nature, then by pressing the observance of it by several inducements.

The nature of it will, as I conceive, be best understood by representing the several chief acts, which it compriseth or implieth as necessary pre-requisites, or essential ingredients, or inseparable adherents to it; some internally resident in the soul, others discharged in external performance; together with some special properties of it. And such are those which follow:—

I. *Loving our neighbour* doth imply, that we should value and esteem him: this is necessary, for affection doth follow opinion; so that we cannot like any thing which we do not esteem, or wherein we do not apprehend some considerable good, attractive of affection; that is not amiable, which is wholly contemptible; or so far as it is such.

But in right judgment no man is such; for the Wise Man telleth us, that *he that despiseth his neighbour, sinneth*; and, *He is void of understanding that despiseth his neighbour*⁸; but no man is guilty of sin or folly for despising that which is wholly despicable.

It is indeed true, that every man is subject to defects and to mischances, apt to breed contempt, especially in the minds of vulgar and weak people; but no man is really despicable. For,

Every man living hath stamped on him the venerable

⁶ 1 John iii. 23. 11; iv. 21. ⁷ John xv. 12; xiii. 34, 35.

⁸ Prov. xiv. 21; xi. 12.

image of his glorious Maker, which nothing incident to him can utterly deface.

Every man is of a divine extraction, and allied to Heaven by nature and by grace; as the son of God, and brother of God incarnate: *If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?*^o

Every man is endued with that celestial faculty of reason, *inspired by the Almighty* (for, *There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding*), and hath an immortal spirit residing in him; or rather is himself an angelical spirit dwelling in a visible tabernacle.

Every man was originally designed and framed for a fruition of eternal happiness.

Every man hath an interest in the common redemption, purchased by the blood of the Son of God, who *tasted death for every one*.

Every man is capable of sovereign bliss, and hath a crown of endless glory offered to him.

In fine, every man, and all men alike, antecedently to their own will and choice, are the objects of his love, of his care, of his mercy; who is *loving unto every man, and whose mercy is over all his works; who hath made the small and the great, and careth for all alike; who is rich, in bounty and mercy, toward all that call upon him*¹.

How then can any man be deemed contemptible, having so noble relations, capacities, and privileges? How a man standeth in esteem with God, Elihu telleth us: *God* (saith he) *is mighty, and despiseth not any*². Although he be so mighty, so excellent in perfection, so infinitely in state exalted above all, yet doth not he slight any; and how can we condemn those, whom the

^o Job xxxi. 13, 14, 15; xxxii. 8.

¹ Ps. cxlv. 9; Job xxxiv. 19; Wisd. vi. 8; Rom. x. 12; iii. 22.

² Job xxxvi. 5; Ps. lxix. 33.

certain Voucher and infallible Judge of worth deigneth to value? Indeed, God so valued every man as to take great care, to be at great cost and trouble, to stoop down from heaven, to assume mortal flesh, to endure pinching wants and sore distresses, to *taste death for every one*.

We may ask with St. Paul, *Why dost thou set at nought thy brother*³?

Is it for the lowness of his condition, or for any misfortune that hath befallen him? But are not the best men, are not all men, art not thou thyself, obnoxious to the like⁴? Hath not God declared that he hath a special regard to such? and are not such things commonly disposed by his hand with a gracious intent?

Is it for meanness of parts, or abilities, or endowments? But are not these the gifts of God, absolutely at his disposal, and arbitrarily distributed or preserved; so that thou who art so wise in thy own conceit to-day, mayest, by a disease, or from a judgment, deserved by thy pride, become an idiot to-morrow? Have not many good, and therefore many happy men, wanted those things⁵?

Is it for moral imperfections or blemishes; for vicious habits, or actual misdemeanours? These indeed are the only debasements and disparagements of a man; yet do they not expunge the characters of divinity impressed on his nature; and he may by God's mercy recover from them. And are not we ourselves, if grace do not uphold us, liable to the same? Yea, may we not, if without partiality or flattery we examine ourselves, discern the same within us, or other defects equivalent? And, however, is not pity rather due to them than contempt? Whose character was it, that *they trusted they were righteous, and despised others*⁶? That the most palpable offender should not be quite despised, God had a special care in his Law, for that end moderating punishment, and restraining the number of stripes: *If (saith the Law) the wicked man be*

³ Rom. xiv. 10.

⁴ James ii. 5; Ps. xxxvii. 33; cxlvi. 9.

⁵ 1 Cor. i. 26.

⁶ Luke xviii. 9; xvi. 15.

*worthy to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee*⁷.

We may consider that the common things, both good and bad, wherein men agree, are far more considerable than the peculiar things wherein they differ: to be a man, is much beyond being a lord, or a wit, or a philosopher; to be a Christian, doth infinitely surpass being an emperor, or a learned clerk; to be a sinner, is much worse than to be a beggar, or an idiot. The agreement of men is in the substance and body of things; the difference is in a circumstance, a fringe, or a shadow about them; so that we cannot despise another man, without reflecting contempt on ourselves, who are so very like him, and not considerably better than he, or hardly can without arrogance pretend to be so.

We may, therefore, and reason doth require, that we should value our neighbour; and it is no impossible or unreasonable precept which St. Peter giveth us, to *honour all men*⁸; and with it a charitable mind will easily comply: it ever will descry something valuable, something honourable, something amiable in our neighbour; it will find somewhat of dignity in the meanest, somewhat of worth in the basest, somewhat hopeful in the most degenerate of men; it therefore will not absolutely slight or scorn any man whatever, looking on him as an abject or forlorn wretch, unworthy of consideration⁹.

It is indeed a point of charity to see more things estimable in others than in ourselves; or to be apprehensive of more defects meriting disesteem in ourselves than in others; and consequently in our opinion to prefer others before us, according to those apostolical precepts, *Be kindly affected one toward another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another*. In

⁷ Deut. xxv. 2, 3.

⁸ 1 Pet. ii. 17.

⁹ 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

*lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Be subject one to another*¹.

II. Loving our neighbour doth imply a sincere and earnest desire of his welfare, and good of all kinds, in due proportion : for it is a property of love, that it would have its object most worthy of itself, and consequently that it should attain the best state whereof it is capable, and persist firm therein ; to be fair and plump, to flourish and thrive without diminution or decay ; this is plain to experience in respect to any other thing (a horse, a flower, a building, or any such thing) which we pretend to love : wherefore charity should dispose us to be thus affected to our neighbour ; so that we do not look upon his condition or affairs with an indifferent eye or cold heart, but are much concerned for him, and put forth hearty wishes for his interests : we should wish him adorned with all virtue, and accomplished with all worthy endowments of soul ; we should wish him prosperous success in all his designs, and a comfortable satisfaction of his desires ; we should wish him with alacrity of mind to reap the fruits of his industry, and to enjoy the best accommodations of his life. Not formally and in compliment, as the mode is, but really and with a cordial sense, upon his undertaking any enterprise, we should wish him good speed ; upon any prosperous success of his endeavours, we should bid him joy ; wherever he is going, whatever he is doing, we should wish him peace and the presence of God with him ; we should tender his health, his safety, his quiet, his reputation, his wealth, his prosperity, in all respects ; but especially with peculiar ardency we should desire his final welfare, and the happiness of his soul, that being incomparably his chief concern.

Hence readily should we pour forth our prayers, which are the truest expressions of good desire, for the welfare of our neighbour, to Him who is able to work and bestow it.

Such was the charity of St. Paul for his countrymen,

¹ Rom. xii. 10 ; Phil. ii. 3 ; 1 Pet. v. 5.

signified in those words: *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved*²; such was his love to the Philippians, *God is my record, how greatly I long after you all*³ *in the bowels of Jesus Christ: and this I pray, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment*⁴.

Such was St. John's charity to his friend Gaius, to whom he said, *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth*⁵.

Such is the charity which we are enjoined to express toward all men, by *praying for all men*, in conformity to the charity of God, who *will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth*⁶.

Such is the charity we are commanded to use toward our enemies, *blessing those who curse us, and praying for those who despitefully use us, and persecute us*⁷; the which was exemplified by our Lord, by St. Stephen, by all the holy apostles.

III. Charity doth imply a complacence or delightful satisfaction in the good of our neighbour; this is consequent on the former property, for that joy naturally doth result from events agreeable to our desire: charity hath a good eye, which is not offended or dazzled with the lustre of its neighbour's virtue, or with the splendour of his fortune, but vieweth either of them steadily with pleasure, as a very delightful spectacle; it beholdeth him to prosper and flourish, to grow in wealth and repute, not only without envious repining, but with gladsome content: its property is *to rejoice with them that rejoice*⁸; to partake of their enjoyments, to feast in their pleasures, to triumph in their success.

As one member doth feel the health and the delight which another immediately doth enjoy⁹, so hath a charitable man a sensible complacence in the welfare and joy of his neighbour.

² Rom. x. i.

³ ἐπιποθῶ ὑμᾶς.

⁴ Phil. i. 8; 2 Cor. xiii. 9.

⁵ 3 John 2.

⁶ 1 Tim. ii. 3.

⁷ Matt. v. 44; Luke xxiii. 34; Acts vii. 60; 1 Cor. iv. 12.

⁸ Rom. xii. 15.

⁹ 1 Cor. xii. 26.

His prosperity of any kind, in proportion to its importance, doth please him; but especially his spiritual proficiency and improvement in virtue doth yield matter of content; and his good deeds he beholdeth with abundant satisfaction.

This is that instance of charity which St. Paul so frequently doth express in his epistles¹, declaring the extreme joy he did feel in the faith, in the virtue, in the orderly conversation of those brethren to whom he writeth.

This charity possessed St. John, when he said, *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth*².

This is the charity of heaven, which doth even cheer the angels, and doth enhance the bliss of the blessed spirits there; of whom it is said, *There is joy in heaven over every sinner that repenteth*³. Hence this is the disposition of charitable persons, sincerely to congratulate any good occurrence to their neighbour; they are ready to conspire in rendering thanks and praise to the Author of their welfare, taking the good conferred on their neighbour as a blessing and obligation on themselves; so that they upon such occasions are apt to say with St. Paul, *What thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before God?* and, *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and that the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth*: and, *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him*⁴.

It is a precept of St. Paul, *Give thanks always ὑπὲρ πάντων*; which is translated *for all things*⁵, but it might as well be rendered *for all persons*, according to that injunction, *I exhort, that, first of all, supplications, prayers,*

¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 9; Phil. ii. 2; iv. 1; 1 Thess. iii. 9; ii. 19.

² 3 John 4.

³ Luke xv. 7. 10.

⁴ 1 Thess. iii. 9; 2 Thess. i. 3; 1 Cor. i. 4, 5; (Phil. i. 3; Rom. i. 8; Eph. i. 16; Col. i. 3; 1 Thess. i. 2.)

⁵ Eph. v. 20.

intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men ⁶: not only prayers are to be made, but thanksgivings are to be offered for all men, out of general charity.

IV. Correspondently, love of our neighbour doth imply condolency and commiseration of the evils befalling him: for what we love, we cannot without displeasure behold lying in a bad condition, sinking into decay, or in danger to perish; so to a charitable mind the bad state of any man is a most unpleasant and painful sight.

It is the property of charity to *mourn with those that mourn*⁷; not coldly, but passionately (for it is *to weep with those that weep*), resenting every man's case with an affection suitable thereto, and as he doth himself resent it.

Is any man fallen into disgrace? charity doth hold down its head, is abashed and out of countenance, partaking of his shame: is any man disappointed of his hopes or endeavours? charity crieth out *alas!* as if it were itself defeated: is any man afflicted with pain or sickness? charity looketh sadly, it sigheth and groaneth, it fainteth and languisheth with him: is any man pinched with hard want? charity, if it cannot succour, it will condole: doth ill news arrive? charity doth hear it with an unwilling ear and a sad heart, although not particularly concerned in it. The sight of a wreck at sea, of a field spread with carcasses, of a country desolated, of houses burnt and cities ruined, and of the like calamities incident to mankind, would touch the bowels of any man; but the very report of them would affect the heart of charity. It doth not suffer a man with comfort or ease to enjoy the accommodations of his own state, while others before him are in distress: it cannot be merry while any man in presence is sorrowful: it cannot seem happy while its neighbour doth appear miserable: it hath a share in all the afflictions which it doth behold or hear of, according to that instance in St. Paul of the Philippians, *Ye have done*

⁶ 1 Tim. ii. 1.

⁷ Κλαίειν. Rom. xii. 15.

well, that ye did communicate with^a (or partake in) my afflictions; and according to that precept, Remember those which are in bonds, as bound with them^b.

Such was the charity of Job: *Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor¹⁰?*

Such was the charity of the Psalmist, even toward his ingrateful enemies: *They (saith he) rewarded me evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul; but as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth, I humbled my soul with fasting. I behaved myself as though it had been my friend or my brother; I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother¹¹.*

Such was the charity of St. Paul: *Who is weak (said he), and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not¹?* with fervent compassion.

Such was the charity of our Saviour; which so reigned in his heart, that no passion is so often attributed to him as this of pity, it being expressed to be the motive of his great works. *Jesus (saith St. Matthew) went forth, and saw a great multitude, καὶ ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτοῖς, and was moved (in his bowels) with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick². and, I have compassion³ on the multitude, because they have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way⁴: and, Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes⁵: and, Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him (the leper), and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean⁶: and, When the Lord saw her (the widow of Nain, whose son was carried out), he had compassion on her⁷: and He beheld the city, and wept over it⁸, considering the miseries impendent on it, as a just punishment of their outrageous injuries against himself: and when the two good sisters did bewail their brother*

^a Phil. iv. 14. Συγκοινωνήσαντες.

^b Heb. xiii. 3.

¹⁰ Job xxx. 25.

¹¹ Ps. xxxv. 12, 13, 14.

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 29.

² Matt. xiv. 14.

³ Σπλαγχνίζομαι.

⁴ Matt. xv. 32.

⁵ Matt. xx. 34.

⁶ Mark i. 41.

⁷ Luke vii. 13.

⁸ Luke xix. 41.

Lazarus, *He groaned in spirit, and was troubled; and wept with them: whence the Jews did collect, Behold how he loved him* °!

Thus any calamity or misfortune befalling his neighbour doth raise distasteful regret and commiseration in a charitable soul; but especially moral evils (which indeed are the great evils, in comparison whereto nothing else is evil) do work that effect; to see men dishonour and wrong their Maker, to provoke his anger, and incur his disfavour; to see men abuse their reason, and disgrace their nature; to see men endamage their spiritual estate, to endanger the loss of their souls, to discost from their happiness, and run into eternal ruin, by distemper of mind and an inordinate conversation; this is most afflictive to a man endued with any good degree of charity. Could one see a man sprawling on the ground, weltering in his blood, with gaping wounds, gasping for breath, without compassion? And seeing the condition of him that lieth grovelling in sin, weltering in guilt, wounded with bitter remorse and pangs of conscience, nearly obnoxious to eternal death, is far worse and more deplorable; how can it but touch the heart of a charitable man, and stir his bowels with compassionate anguish?

Such was the excellent charity of the holy Psalmist, signified in those ejaculations: *I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word: and Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law* ¹.

Such was the charity of St. Paul toward his incredulous and obdurate countrymen (notwithstanding their hatred and ill treatment of himself), the which he so earnestly did aver in those words: *I say the truth, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart* ² for them.

Such was the charity of our Lord, which disposed him, as to a continual sense of men's evils, so upon

° John xi. 33. 35, 36.

¹ Ps. cxix. 158; 136.

² Rom. ix. 1, 2.

particular occasions to grieve at their sins and spiritual wants; as when the Pharisees maligned him for his doing good, he, it is said, did συλλυπεῖσθαι, grieve (or condole) *for the hardness of their heart*³; and, *When he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd*⁴; and when he wept over Jerusalem, because it did not know in its day the things which belonged to its peace⁵, (either temporal, or eternal.)

This is that charity, which God himself in a wonderful and incomprehensible manner doth exemplify to us: for he is *the Father of pities*; πολὺσπλαγχνος, *full of bowels*; his bowels are troubled, and do sound, when he is (for upholding justice, or reclaiming sinners) constrained to inflict punishment; of him it is said, that *his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel*; and that he was *afflicted in all the afflictions* of his people⁶. So incredible miracles doth infinite charity work in God, that the impassible God in a manner should suffer with us, that happiness itself should partake in our misery; that grief should spring up in the fountain of joy. How this can be, we thoroughly cannot well apprehend; but surely those expresses are used in condescension to signify the greatly charitable benignity of God, and to show us our duty, that *we should be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful*, sympathizing with the miseries and sorrows of our brethren⁷.

This is that duty which is so frequently inculcated; when we are charged to *put on bowels of pity*, to be εὐσπλαγχνοί, *tender-hearted*, to be συμπαθεῖς, *compassionate one toward another*⁸.

Hence it is, that good men in this world cannot live in any briskness of mirth or height of jollity, their own enjoyments being tempered by the discontents of

³ Mark iii. 5.

⁴ Matt. ix. 36.

⁵ Luke xix. 41.

⁶ James v. 11; Luke i. 78; Jer. xxxi. 20; Isa. lxiii. 15; Judges x. 16; (ὠλεγὼθη. LXX.) Isa. lxiii. 9; (Hos. xi. 8.)

⁷ Luke vi. 36; Eph. v. 1; (Luke xvi. 20.)

⁸ Col. iii. 12; Phil. ii. 1; Eph. iv. 32; 1 Pet. iii. 8.

others; the continual obvious spectacles of sorrow and of sin damping their pleasures, and quashing excessive transports of joy: for who could much enjoy himself in an hospital, in a prison, in a charnel?

V. It is generally a property of love to appropriate its object; in apprehension and affection embracing it, possessing it, enjoying it as its own: so charity doth make our neighbour to be ours, engaging us to tender his case and his concerns as our own; so that we shall exercise about them the same affections of soul (the same desires, the same hopes and fears, the same joys and sorrows), as about our own nearest and most peculiar interest; so that his danger will affright us, and in his security we shall find repose; his profit is gain, and his losses are damages to us; we do rise by his preferment, and sink down by his fall; his good speed is a satisfaction, and his disappointment a cross to us; his enjoyments afford pleasure, and his sufferings bring pain to us.

So charity doth enlarge our minds beyond private considerations, conferring on them an universal interest, and reducing all the world within the verge of their affectionate care; so that a man's self is a very small and inconsiderable portion of his regard: whence charity is said not to *seek its own things*, and we are commanded not to *look on our own things*⁹; for that the regard which charity beareth to its own interest, in comparison to that which it beareth toward the concerns of others, hath the same proportion as one man hath to all men; being therefore exceedingly small, and as it were none at all.

*This (saith St. Chrysostom) is the canon of most perfect Christianity, this is an exact boundary, this is the highest top of it, to seek things profitable to the public*¹: and according to this rule charity doth walk²;

⁹ 1 Cor. xiii. 5; x. 24; Phil. ii. 4.

¹ Τοῦτο κανὼν χριστιανισμοῦ τοῦ πλειοτάτου, τοῦτο ὄρος ἡκριβωμένος, αὕτη ἡ κορυφή ἡ ἀνωτάτω, τὸ τὰ κοινῇ συμφέροντα ζητεῖν.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. xxv.

² Phil. iv. 16.

it prescribeth that compass to itself, it aspireth to that pitch; it disposeth to act as St. Paul did, *I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved*³.

VI. It is a property of love to affect union, or the greatest approximation that can be to its object. As hatred doth set things at distance, making them to shun or chase away one another; so love doth attract things, doth combine them, doth hold them fast together; every one would be embracing and enjoying what he loveth in the manner whereof it is capable: so doth charity dispose a man to conjunction with others; it soon will breed acquaintance, kind conversation, and amicable correspondence with our neighbour.

It would be a stranger to no man, to whom by its intercourse it may yield any benefit or comfort.

Its arms are always open, and its bosom free to receive all, who do not reject or decline its amity.

It is most frankly accessible, most affable, most tractable, most sociable, most apt to interchange good offices; most ready to oblige others, and willing to be obliged by them.

It avoideth that unreasonable suspiciousness and diffidence, that timorous shyness, that crafty reservedness, that supercilious morosity, that fastidious sullenness, and the like untoward dispositions, which keep men in estrangement, stifling good inclinations to familiarity and friendship.

VII. It is a property of love to desire a reciprocal affection⁴; for that is the surest possession and firmest union, which is grounded upon voluntarily conspiring in affection; and if we do value any person, we cannot but prize his good will and esteem.

Charity is the mother of friendship, not only as inclining us to love others, but as attracting others to love us; disposing us to affect their amity, and by obliging means to procure it.

³ 1 Cor. x. 33.

⁴ Spes mutuæ charitatis.—*Sen. Ep. ix.*

Hence is that evangelical precept so often enjoined to us, of *pursuing peace with all men*, importing that we should desire and seek by fair means the good will of men, without which peace from them cannot subsist⁵; for if they do not love us, they will be infesting us with unkind words or deeds.

VIII. Hence also charity disposeth to please our neighbour, not only by inoffensive, but by obliging demeanour; by a ready complaisance and compliance with his fashion, with his humour, with his desire in matters lawful, or in a way consistent with duty and discretion.

Such charity St. Paul did prescribe; *Let every one please his neighbour, for his good to edification*⁶: such he practised himself; *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit*; and, *I have made myself a servant to all, that I might gain the more*⁷.

Such was the charity of our Lord, for *even Christ pleased not himself*⁸: he indeed did stoop to converse with sorry men in their way, he came when he was invited, he accepted their entertainment, he from the frankness of his conversation with all sorts of persons did undergo the reproach of being a *winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners*⁹.

It is the genius and complexion of charity to affect nothing uncouth or singular in matters of indifferent nature; to be candid, not rigid, in opinion; to be pliable, not stiff, in humour; to be smooth and gentle, not rugged and peevish, in behaviour.

It doth indeed not flatter, not soothe, not humour any man in bad things, or in things very absurd and foolish; it would rather choose to displease and cross him, than to abuse, to delude, to wrong, or hurt him; but excepting such cases, it gladly pleaseth all men, denying its own will and conceit to satisfy the pleasure and fancy of others; practising that which St. Peter enjoined in that precept, *Be of one mind, be compas-*

⁵ Heb. xii. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 22; Rom. xii. 18. ⁶ Rom. xv. 2.

⁷ 1 Cor. x. 33; ix. 19.

⁸ Rom. xv. 3; John ii. 2.

⁹ Matt. xi. 19; Luke vii. 34.

sionate, *love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous*¹; or as St. Paul might intend, when he bid us χαρίζεσθαι ἀλλήλοις, *to gratify, to indulge one another*².

IX. Love of our neighbour doth imply readiness upon all occasions to do him good, to promote and advance his benefit in all kinds.

It doth not rest in good opinions of mind, and good affections of heart, but from those roots doth put forth abundant fruits of real beneficence; it will not be satisfied with faint desires or sluggish wishes, but will be up and doing what it can for its neighbour.

Love is a busy and active, a vigorous and sprightly, a courageous and industrious disposition of soul; which will prompt a man, and push him forward to undertake or undergo any thing, to endure pains, to encounter dangers, to surmount difficulties, for the good of its object³.

Such is true charity: it will dispose us *to love*, as St. John prescribeth, ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ, *in work and in truth*⁴; not only in mental desire, but in effectual performance; not only in verbal pretence, but in real effect.

Hence charity will render a man a general benefactor, in all matters, upon all occasions; affording to his neighbour all kinds of assistance and relief, according to his neighbour's need, and his own ability: it will make him a bountiful dispenser of his goods to the poor, a comforter of the afflicted, a visitor of the sick, an instructor of the ignorant, an adviser of the doubtful, a protector of the oppressed, a hospitable entertainer of strangers, a reconciler of differences, an intercessor for offenders, an advocate of those who need defence, a succourer of all that want help⁵. The prac-

¹ Ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὐσπλαγχνοι, φιλόφρονες.—1 Pet. iii. 8.

² Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13.

³ "Love is strong as death."—Cant. viii. 6.

⁴ 1 John iii. 8; James ii. 16.

⁵ Ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενούντων. Acts xx. 35.—Ἀντέχεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενούντων. 1 Thess. v. 14.—Παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους. 1 Thess. v. 14; Job xxix. 17; xxxi. 32.

tice of Job describeth its nature: *I (saith he) delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame: I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out: and I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. If I have held the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering. The stranger did not lodge in the street; but I opened my doors to the traveller*⁶.

Such is a charitable man; the sun is not more liberal of his light and warmth, than he is of beneficial influence.

He doth not spare his substance, being *rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate*: and where his estate faileth, yet the contribution of his endeavour will not be wanting; he will be ready to draw and press others to beneficence; so doing good not only according to his power, but in a manner beyond it, making the ability of others to supply his own weakness, and being liberal with their wealth. The description of Cimon is a good character of a charitable man: *Nulli fides ejus, nulli opera, nulli res familiaris defuit*⁷.

Thus may the poorest men be great benefactors: so the poor apostles, who *had nothing*, yet *did enrich many*; not only in spiritual treasure, but taking care for supply of the poor, by their precepts and moving exhortations⁸: and He that *had not where to lay his head*, was the most bountiful person that ever was: *for our sake he became poor, that we by his poverty might be made rich*⁹.

In all kinds charity disposeth to further our neighbour's good, but especially in the concerns of his soul;

⁶ Job xxix. 12; xxxi. 16. 32.

⁷ Corn. Nep. in Cimine.

⁸ (1 Cor. iv. 11;) 2 Cor. vi. 10,—ὡς πτωχοί, πολλοὺς δὲ πλουτίζοντες.

⁹ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

the which as incomparably they do surpass all others, so it is the truest and noblest charity to promote them.

It will incline us *to draw forth our soul to the hungry, and to satisfy the afflicted soul; to bring the poor that are cast out to our house; to cover the naked, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke*¹; to supply any corporal indigency, to relieve any temporal distress: but especially it will induce to make provision for the soul, to relieve the spiritual needs of our neighbour; by affording him good instruction, and taking care that he be informed in his duty, or conducted in his way to happiness; by admonition and exhortation quickening, encouraging, *provoking*, spurring him *to good works*²; by resolving him in his doubts, and comforting him in his troubles of conscience; (*lifting up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees*³;) by seasonable and prudent reproof: by all ways *serving to convert him from the error of his way; and so saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins*; which is the proper work of charity; for *charity* (saith St. Peter) *covereth a multitude of sins*⁴.

This was the charity of our Saviour: *He went about doing good*, healing the bodily infirmities (*every sickness and every disease among the people*⁵;) satisfying their bodily necessities, comforting them in their worldly distresses, so far as to perform great miracles for those purposes (curing inveterate maladies, restoring limbs and senses, raising the dead, multiplying loaves and fishes): but his charity was chiefly exercised in spiritual beneficence; in purveying sustenance and comfort for their souls, in feeding their minds by wholesome instruction, in curing their spiritual distempers, in correcting their ignorances and errors, in exciting them to duty by powerful advices and exhortations, in support-

¹ Isa. lviii. 7—10; Ezek. xviii. 16.

² Εἰς παροξυσμὸν καλῶν ἔργων.—Heb. x. 24.

³ Ἀνορθώσατε.—Heb. xii. 12.

⁴ 1 Thess. v. 14; James v. 20; 1 Pet. iv. 8; Prov. x. 12.

⁵ Acts x. 38; Matt. iv. 23; ix. 35.

ing them by heavenly consolations against temptations and troubles ⁶.

Thus also did the charity of the holy apostles principally exert itself: they did not neglect affording relief to the outward needs of men; they did take care by earnest intercession and exhortation for support of the poor; but especially they did labour to promote the spiritual benefit of men: for this they did undertake so many cares, and toils, and travels; for this they did undergo so many hardships, so many hazards, so many difficulties and troubles ⁷: *Therefore, said St. Paul, I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory* ⁸.

X. This indeed is a property of charity, to make a man deny himself, to neglect his own interest, yea, to despise all selfish regards, for the benefit of his neighbour: to him, that is inspired with charity, his own good is not good, when it standeth in competition with the more considerable good of another; nothing is so dear to him, which he gladly will not part with upon such considerations.

Liberty is a precious thing, which every man gladly would enjoy; yet how little did St. Paul's charity regard it! how absolutely did he abandon it for his neighbour's good! *Though* (said he) *I am free from all men, yet I have made myself servant* (or have enslaved myself) *unto all* ⁹, *that I might gain the more*: and he did express much satisfaction in the bonds which he bare for the good of his brethren ¹. *I, Paul, (saith he) the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles;—I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds;—endure all things for the elect's sakes* ².

Every man loveth his own humour, and would please

⁶ John xiv. 1; xv. 11; xvi. 33; Matt. v. 10.

⁷ Acts iii. 6; v. 15, 16; viii. 7; xxviii. 8, 9; xx. 35; Rom. xv. 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 1; Gal. ii. 10; 2 Cor. viii. 7; ix. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 18; Heb. xiii. 16.

⁸ 2 Tim. ii. 10.

¹ Phil. i. 12.

⁹ Πᾶσιν ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα, 1 Cor. ix. 19.

² Eph. iii. 1—13; 2 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

himself: but the charity of St. Paul did rather choose to please *all men*; making him *all things to all men, that by all means he might save some*: and the rule he commended to others, and imposed on himself, was this: *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves*³.

Profit is the common mark of men's designs and endeavours; but charity often doth not aim thereat, but waveth it for its neighbour's advantage: for *μη σκοπεῖτε, Aim not every man at his own things, but every man also at the things of others*, is St. Paul's rule; and, *Not to seek his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved*, was his practice⁴.

To suffer is grievous to human nature, and every man would shun it; but charity not only doth support it, but joyeth in it, when it conduceth to its neighbour's advantage: *I rejoyce* (said that charitable apostle) *in my sufferings for you*⁵.

Ease is a thing generally desirable and acceptable; but charity doth part with it, embracing labour, watchings, travels, and troubles, for its neighbour's good: upon this account did the holy apostles undertake abundant labours, as St. Paul telleth us; and, *to this end* (saith he) *do I labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily*: to what end?—*that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*: this is that *κόπος ἀγάπης*, that *labour of love*, which they did commend in others, and so notably themselves exercise⁶.

Life of all things is held most precious and dear; yet *this* charity upon urgent occasions will expose, will sacrifice for its neighbour's good: *This* (our Lord telleth us) *is the greatest love that any man can express to his friend*⁷; and the highest instance that ever was of charity was herein showed; the imitation whereof St.

³ 1 Cor. ix. 33; x. 22; Rom. xv. 1.

⁴ Phil. ii. 4; 1 Cor. x. 24.

⁵ Col. i. 24; 2 Cor. i. 4. 6; vii. 4.

⁶ 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8; 2 Cor. xi. 23; vi. 5. Εἰς ὃ καὶ κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος. Col. i. 29; Acts xxi. 31. 35; Heb. vi. 7; 1 Thess. i. 3.

⁷ John xv. 13.

John doth not doubt to recommend to us : *In this* (saith he) *have we known the love of God, because he hath laid down his life for us ; and we ought to lay down our life for the brethren :* and St. Paul, *Walk in love, even as Christ loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God :* the which precept he backed with his own example : *I* (saith he) *very gladly will spend and be spent for your souls ;* and, *If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all ;* and, *Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us*⁸.

Reputation to some is more dear than life, and it is worse than death to be held a malefactor, to be loaded with odious reproaches, to have an infamous character ; yet charity will engage men hereto, willingly to sustain the most grievous obloquy and disgrace : for this the same heroical apostles did pass through *honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true*⁹ :—for this they *were made a spectacle to the world, as fools, as weak, as despicable ;—were reviled, defamed, made as the filth of the world, and offscouring of all things*¹. For this St. Paul is content to *suffer, ως κακούργος, as a malefactor*². So there is nothing which charity will not deny itself and lose for the good of its neighbour.

XI. It is a property of love not to stand upon distinctions and nice respects ; but to be condescensive, and willing to perform the meanest offices, needful or useful, for the good of its friend.

He that truly loveth, is a voluntary servant, and gladly will stoop to any employment, for which the need or considerable benefit of him whom he loveth doth call.

So the greatest souls, and the most glorious beings, the which are most endued with charity, by it are disposed with greatest readiness to serve their inferiors.

⁸ 1 John iii. 16 ; John xv. 12 ; Eph. v. 2 ; 2 Cor. xii. 15 ; Phil. ii. 17 ; 1 Thess. ii. 8.

⁹ 2 Cor. vi. 8.

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 9, 10, 13.

² 2 Tim. ii. 9.

This made St. Paul constitute himself *a servant* (we might render it a slave) *of all men*³, absolutely devoted to the promoting their interests with his utmost labour and diligence; undertaking toilsome drudgeries, running about upon errands for them.

This maketh the blessed and glorious angels (the principalities and powers above) vouchsafe to wait on men, to be the guards of all good men, to be ministering spirits, *sent out to minister for them who shall inherit salvation*⁴: not only obedience to God enforceth them, but charity disposeth them gladly to serve us, who are so much their inferiors: the same charity, which produceth joy in them at the conversion of a sinner⁵.

This made the Son of God to descend from heaven, and lay aside that *glory which he had with God before the world was*⁶; this made him who was so rich to become poor, that we by his poverty might be enriched⁷; this made him converse and demean himself among his servants, *as he that ministered*⁸; this made him to wash his disciples' feet, thereby designing instructively to exemplify the duty and nature of charity; for, *If* (said he) *I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; then ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you*⁹.

This maketh God himself (*the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity*⁹) to condescend so far, as to be continually employed in carefully watching over, in providing for, in protecting and assisting us vile and wretched worms; for though *he dwelleth on high, yet humbleth he himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth*¹. This maketh him with so much pain and patience to support our infirmities, to bear with our offences, to wait for our conversion; according to that protestation in the Prophet, *Thou hast made me to*

³ 1 Cor. ix. 19.⁴ Ps. xci. 11; xxxiv. 7; Heb. i. 7. 14.⁵ Luke xv. 7. 10. ἐν ὧπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων.⁶ John xvii. 5.⁷ 2 Cor. viii. 9; Luke xxii. 27; Matt. xx. 28.⁸ John xiii. 14, 15.⁹ Isa. lvii. 15.¹ Ps. cxiii. 6; (Ps. viii. 4; cxliv. 3; Job vii. 17.)

*serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities*².

In conformity to this wonderful practice, whose actions are the best rules and patterns of our deportment, charity should dispose us, according to St. Paul's practice, *by love to serve one another*³.

Indeed it will not suffer any man to look down on another with supercilious contempt or neglect, as if he were unworthy or beneath our regard. It will incline superiors to look on their inferiors (their subjects, their servants, their meanest and poorest neighbours,) not as beasts or as slaves, but as men, as brethren⁴; as descending from the same stock, as partakers of the common nature and reason; as those *who have obtained the like precious faith*⁵; as heirs of the same precious promises and glorious hopes; as their equals in the best things, and in all considerable advantages; equals in God's sight, and according to our Lord's intent, when he said, *One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren*⁶; according to St. Paul's exhortation to Philemon, that he would receive Onesimus, *not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved in the Lord*⁷.

Accordingly, charity will dispose men of rank in their behaviour to be condescending, lowly, meek, courteous, obliging and helpful, to those who in human eye, or in worldly state, are most below them; remembering that ordinance of our Lord, charged on all his disciples, and enforced by his own pattern: *He that is greatest among you let him be your servant*⁸.

Love indeed is the great leveller, which in a manner setteth all things on even ground, and reduceth to a just poise⁹; which bringeth down heaven to earth, and raiseth up earth to heaven; which inclineth the highest to wait upon the lowest; which engageth the strength of the mightiest to help the weakest, and the wealth of

² Isa. xliii. 24.

³ Gal. v. 13.

⁴ Job xxxi. 13, 14, 15.

⁵ 2 Pet. i. 1.

⁶ Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1; Matt. xxiii. 9.

⁷ Philem. 16.

⁸ Matt. xxiii. 11; Luke xxii. 27.

⁹ Amicitia pares invenit, aut facit.

the richest to supply the poorest, ὅπως γίνηται ἰσότης, that *there may be an equality*¹; that no where there may be an useless abundance, or a helpless indigence.

XII. Charity doth regulate our dealing, our deportment, our conversation, toward our neighbour, implying good usage and fair treatment of him on all occasions; for no man doth handle that which he loveth rudely or roughly, so as to endanger the loss, the detriment, the hurt or offence thereof.

Wherefore the language of charity is soft and sweet, not wounding the heart, nor grating on the ear of any with whom a man converseth; like the language of which the Wise Man saith, *The words of the pure are pleasant words*;—such as are *sweet to the soul, and health to the bones*: and, *The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious*²; such as our Lord's were λόγοι χάριτος, *words of grace*³; such as the Apostle speaketh of, *Let your speech be always ἐν χάριτι, with grace*—such as may *give grace to the hearers*⁴; being entertained, not with aversation, but with favourable acceptance.

Its carriage is gentle, courteous, benign; bearing in it marks of affection and kind respect.

Its dealing is equal, moderate, fair; yielding no occasion of disgust or complaint; not catching at, or taking advantages, not meting hard measure.

It doth not foster any bad passion or humour, which may embitter or sour conversation; so that it rendereth a man continually good company.

If a man be harsh or surly in his discourse, rugged or rude in his demeanour, hard and rigorous in his dealing, it is a certain argument of his defect in charity; for that calmeth and sweeteneth the mind; it quasheth keen, fierce, and boisterous passions; it discardeth those conceits, and those humours, from whence such practice doth issue.

Charity (saith St. Paul) οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ, *behaveth not*

¹ 2 Cor. viii. 14.

² Prov. xv. 26; xvi. 24; Eccles. x. 12.

³ Luke iv. 22.

⁴ Col. iv. 6. ἵνα δῶ χάριν τοῖς ἀκούουσι. Eph. iv. 29.

*itself unhandsomely*⁵; is not untoward, unseemly, uncivil, or clownish in word, or in carriage, or in deed: it is in truth the most civilizing and most polishing disposition that can be: nothing doth render a man so completely genteel; not in an affected or artificial way (consisting in certain postures or motions of body (dopping, cringing, &c.); in forms of expression, or modish addresses, which men learn like parrots, and vent by rote, usually not meaning any thing by them, often with them disguising fraud and rancour), but in a real and natural manner, suggested by good judgment and hearty affection.

A charitable man may perhaps not be guilty of courtship, or may be unpractised in the modes of address; but he will not be deficient in the substance of paying every man proper and due respect: this indeed is true courtesy, grounded on reason, and proceeding from the heart; which therefore is far more genuine, more solid, more steady, than that which is built on fashion, and issueth from affectation; the which indeed only doth ape or counterfeit the deportment of charity; for what a charitable man truly is, that a gallant would seem to be.

Such are the properties of charity.

There be also further many particular acts, which have a very close alliance to it (being ever coherent with it, or springing from it), which are recommended to us by precepts in the holy Scripture; the which it will be convenient to mention.

1. It is a proper act of charity to forbear anger upon provocation, or to repress its motions; to resent injuries and discourtesies either not at all, or very calmly and mildly: for,

Charity *οὐ παροξύνεται*, *is not easily provoked*. Charity *μακροθυμεῖ*, *suffereth long and is kind*. Charity *πάντα ὑπομένει*, *doth endure all things*⁶.

Anger is a violent insurrection of the mind against a

⁵ 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

⁶ 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. 7.

person, but love is not apt to rise up in opposition against any; anger is an intemperate heat, love hath a pure warmth quite of another nature; as natural heat is from a fever; or as the heat of the sun from that of a culinary fire, which putteth that out as the sun-beams do extinguish a culinary fire: anger hath an ὄρεξις ἀμύνης, *an appetite of revenge*, or doing mischief to the object of it; but love is innocent, *and worketh no evil*⁷.

Love disposeth, if our neighbour doth misbehave himself toward us (by wrongful usage, or unkind carriage), to be sorry for him, and to pity him; which are passions contrary to anger, and slaking the violences of it.

It is said in the Canticles, *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it*⁸: charity would hold out against many neglects, many provocations.

Hence the precepts: *Walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love*⁹; *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; Put off anger, wrath, malice, &c. Be slow to wrath*¹⁰.

2. It is a proper act of charity to remit offences, suppressing all designs of revenge, and not retaining any grudge; for,

Charity πάντα στέγει, *doth cover all things*; and in this sense doth *hide a multitude of sins*: all dispositions, all intents to do harm, are inconsistent with it, are quite repugnant to it¹.

Hence those precepts: *Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye: Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one*

⁷ Rom. xiii. 10.

⁸ Cant. viii. 7.

⁹ Ἀνέχεσθαι ἀλλήλων ἐν ἀγάπῃ. Eph. iv. 1, 2.

¹⁰ Eph. iv. 31; 1 Thess. v. 14. μακροθυμεῖτε. Col. iii. 8; James i. 19.

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 7; Prov. x. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 8; James v. 20.

another ; even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you : See that none render evil for evil, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men : and many the like precepts occur in the Gospels, the Apostolical writings ; yea, even in the Old Testament, wherein charity did not run in so high a strain ².

3. It is a duty coherent with charity, to maintain concord and peace ; to abstain from contention and strife, together with the sources of them, pride, envy, emulation, malice.

We are commanded to be *σύμψυχοι* and *ὁμόφρονες*, *of one soul, of one mind* (like the multitude of believers in the Acts, who had one heart and one soul) ; that we should *keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* ; that we should be *of one accord, of one mind, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind* ; that we should *all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among us, but that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment* ; that there be no factions or *schisms in the body* ; that all dissensions, all clamours, all murmurings, all emulations, should be abandoned and put away from us ; that we should *pursue and maintain peace with all men* : obedience to which commands can only be the result of charity, esteeming the person and judgment of our neighbour ; desiring his good will, tendering his good ; curbing those fleshly lusts, and those fierce passions, from the predominacy whereof discords and strife do spring ³.

4. Another charitable practice is, being candid in opinion, and mild in censure, about our neighbour and his actions ; having a good conceit of his person, and representing him to ourselves under the best character

² Col. iii. 12, 13 ; *μομφήν* ; Eph. iv. 32 ; 1 Thess. v. 15 ; 1 Pet. iii. 9 ; Rom. xii. 17 ; Matt. vi. 14 ; v. 44 ; Prov. xx. 22 ; xxv. 21.

³ Phil. ii. 2 ; 1 Pet. iii. 8 ; Acts iv. 32 ; Eph. iv. 3 ; Phil. ii. 2 ; i. 27 ; 1 Cor. i. 10 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 11 ; Rom. xv. 5, 6 ; xii. 16 ; Phil. iii. 16 ; 1 Cor. xii. 25 ; xi. 18 ; i. 11 ; iii. 3 ; 2 Cor. xii. 20 ; Phil. ii. 14 ; Heb. xii. 14 ; Rom. xii. 18 ; 2 Tim. ii. 22 ; James iv. 1 ; 1 Cor. iii. 3 ; Gal. v. 20 ; 1 Tim. vi. 4.

we can; **making the most favourable construction of his words, and the fairest interpretation of his designs.**

Charity **disposeth us to entertain a good opinion of our neighbour; for, desiring his good, we shall be concerned for him, and prejudiced, as it were, on his side; being unwilling to discover any blemish in him to our own disappointment and regret.**

Love **cannot subsist without esteem; and it would not willingly, by destroying that, lose its own subsistence.**

Love **would preserve any good of its friend, and therefore his reputation; which is a good in itself precious, and ever very dear to him.**

Love **would bestow any good, and therefore its esteem; which is a considerable good.**

Harsh censure is a very rude kind of treatment, grievously vexing a man, and really hurting him; charity, therefore, will not be guilty of it.

It **disposeth rather to oversee and connive at faults, than to find them, or to pore on them; rather to hide and smother, than to disclose or divulge them; rather to extenuate and excuse, than to exaggerate or aggravate them.**

Are words capable of a good sense? charity will expound them thereto: may an action be imputed to any good intent? charity will ever refer it thither: doth a fault admit any plea, apology, or diminution? charity will be sure to allege it: may a quality admit a good name? charity will call it thereby⁴.

It doth not λογίζεσθαι κακόν, *impute evil*, or put it to any man's account, beyond absolute necessity.

It *hopeth all things*, and *believeth all things*⁵; hopeth and believeth all things for the best, in favour to its neighbour, concerning his intentions and actions liable to doubt.

It banisheth *all evil surmises*⁶; it rejecteth all ill stories, malicious insinuations, perverse glosses and descants.

⁴ 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

⁵ 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

⁶ 1 Tim. vi. 4.

5. Another charitable practice is, to comport with the infirmities of our neighbour; according to that rule of St. Paul, *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak*⁷, and not to please ourselves; and that precept, *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ*.

Is a man wiser than his neighbour, or in any case freer of defects? charity will dispose to use that advantage so as not to condemn him, or insult over him; but to instruct him, to help him, to comfort him.

As we deal with children, allowing to the infirmities of their age, bearing their ignorance, frowardness, untoward humours, without distasting them; so should we with our brethren who labour under any weakness of mind or humour.

6. It is an act of charity to abstain from offending or scandalizing our brethren; by doing any thing, which either may occasion him to commit sin, or disaffect him to religion, or discourage him in the practice of duty (that which St. Paul calleth to *defile*⁸ and *smite his weak conscience*⁹), or which anywise may discompose, vex, and grieve him: for, *If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably*¹.

⁷ Ἀντέχεσθαι ἀσθενῶν. Acts xx. 35; 1 Thess. v. 14; Rom. xv. 1; Gal. vi. 2.

⁸ Μολύνεται. 1 Cor. x. 7.

⁹ Τύπτουντες τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενούσων. 1 Cor. viii. 12; Rom. xiv. 15.

¹ Οὐκέτι κατὰ ἀγάπην περιπατεῖς. 1 Cor. x. 32; viii. 13; Rom. xiv. 21.

SERMON XI.

OF A PEACEABLE TEMPER AND CARRIAGE.

ROM. xii. 18.

“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

THIS chapter containeth many excellent precepts and wholesome advices (scarce any portion of holy Scripture so many in so little compass). From among them I have selected one, alas! but too seasonable and pertinent to the unhappy condition of our distracted age, wherein to observe this and such like injunctions, is by many esteemed an impossibility, by others a wonder, by some a crime. It hath an apt coherence with, yet no necessary dependence upon, the parts adjoining; whence I may presume to treat upon it distinctly by itself: and without further preface or circumstance we may consider several particulars therein.

I. And first, concerning the advice itself, or the substance of the duty charged on us, *εἰρηνεύειν* (*to be in peace, or live peaceably*), we may take notice, that whether, according to the more usual acception, it be applied to the public estate of things, or, as here, doth relate only to private conversation, it doth import,—

1. Not barely a negation of doing or suffering harm, or an abstinence from strife and violence, (for a mere strangeness this may be, a want of occasion, or a truce, rather than a peace,) but a positive amity, and disposi-

tion to perform such kind offices, without which, good correspondence among men cannot subsist. For they, who, by reason of distance of place, non-acquaintance, or defect of opportunity, maintain no intercourse, cannot properly be said to be in peace with one another: but those who have frequent occasions of commerce, whose conditions require interchanges of courtesy and relief, who are some way obliged and disposed to afford needful succour, and safe retreat to each other; these may be said to live in peace together, and these only, it being in a manner impossible that they who are not disposed to do good to others (if they have power and opportunity) should long abstain from doing harm.

2. Living peaceably implies not some few transitory performances, proceeding from casual humour, or the like; but a constant, stable, and well-settled condition of being; a continual cessation from injury, and promptitude to do good offices. For as one blow doth not make a battle, nor one skirmish a war; so cannot single forbearances from doing mischief, or some few particular acts of kindness (such as mere strangers may afford each other), be worthily styled a being in peace; but an habitual inclination to these, a firm and durable estate of innocence and beneficence.

3. Living in peace supposes a reciprocal condition of being; not only a performing good, and forbearing to do bad offices, but a receiving the like treatment from others. For he, that being assaulted is constrained to stand upon his defence, may not be said to be in peace, though his not being so (involuntarily) is not to be imputed to him.

4. Being in peace imports not only an outward cessation of violence, and seeming demonstration of amity, but an inward will and resolution to continue therein. For he that intends, when occasion is presented, to do mischief to another, is nevertheless an enemy, because more secret and dangerous: an ambuscado is no less a piece of war, than confronting the enemy in open field. Proclaiming and denouncing signify, but good and ill intention constitute, and are

the souls of, peace and war. From these considerations we may infer a description of being in peace, viz. that it is, to bear mutual good-will, to continue in amity, to maintain good correspondence, to be upon terms of mutual courtesy and benevolence; to be disposed to perform reciprocally all offices of humanity; assistance in need, comfort in sorrow, relief in distress; to please and satisfy one another, by advancing the innocent delight, and promoting the just advantage of each other; to converse with confidence and security, without suspicion, on either hand, of any fraudulent, malicious, or hurtful practices against either: or, negatively, not to be in a state of enmity, personal hatred, pertinacious anger, jealousy, envy, or ill-will; not to be apt to provoke, to reproach, to harm or hinder another, nor to have reasonable grounds of expecting the same bad usage from others; to be removed from danger of vexatious quarrels, intercourse of odious language, offending others, or being disquieted one's self. This I take to be the meaning of living or being in peace, differing only in degree of obligation, and latitude of object, from the state of friendship properly so called, and opposed to a condition of enmity, defiance, contention, hatred, suspicion, animosity.

II. In the next place we may consider the object of this duty, signified in those words, *with all men*. We often meet in Scripture with exhortations directed peculiarly to Christians, to be at peace among themselves: as (Mark ix. 50) our Saviour lays this injunction upon his disciples, *εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἀλλήλοις*, *Have peace one with another*; inculcated by St. Paul upon the Thessalonians in the same words¹; and the like we have in the second Epistle to Timothy, chap. ii. ver. 22; *Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart*: and to the Romans (xiv. 19); *Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another*². But here the duty hath a more large and

¹ 1 Thess. v. 13.

² *Vide* Eph. iv. 3.

comprehensive object; πάντες ἄνθρωποι, *all men*: as likewise it hath in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xii. ver. 14, *Pursue peace with all men*: with all men, without any exception; with men of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians; of all sects and religions, persecuting Jews and idolatrous heathens (for of such consisted the generality of men at that time); and so St. Paul expressly in a like advice, (1 Cor. x. 32, 33,) *Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God; even as I please all men.* And I may add, by evident parity of reason, with men of all degrees and estates, high and low, noble and base, rich and poor; of all tempers and dispositions, meek and angry, gentle and froward, pliable and perverse; of all endowments, wise and foolish, virtuous and vicious; of all judgments and persuasions, orthodox and heretical, peaceable and schismatical persons: this universally vast and boundless term, *all men*, contains them all. Neither is there any evading our obligation to this duty, by pretending about others, that they differ from us in humour and complexion of soul, that they entertain opinions irreconcilably contrary to ours; that they adhere to sects and parties which we dislike and disavow; that they are not so virtuous, so religious, so holy as they should be, or at least not in such a manner as we would have them; for be this allegation true or false, it will not excuse us: while they are not divested of human nature, and can truly lay claim to the name and title of men, we are by virtue of this precept obliged to live peaceably with them.

III. We may consider the qualification of the duty here expressed, and what those words mean, *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you.* To which purpose we may advert, from our description of living peaceably, that it consists mainly of two parts: one *active*, or proceeding from us, and terminated on others—to bear good-will, to do good offices, to procure the profit, delight, and welfare, to abstain from the displeasure, damage, and disturbance, of others: the other *passive*, issuing from others, and terminated on ourselves—that

they be well affected toward us, inclinable to do us good, and nowise disposed to wish, design, or bring any harm, trouble, or vexation upon us. Whereof the former is altogether in our power, consisting of acts or omissions, depending upon our free choice and counsel: and we are directly obliged to it, by virtue of those words, τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν, *as much as lieth in you*: the latter is not fully so, yet commonly there be probable means of effecting it, which we are hence bound to use, though sometimes they may fail of success. For the words εἰ δυνατόν, *if it be possible*, as they signify the utmost endeavour is to be employed, and that no difficulty (beneath the degree of impossibility) can discharge us from it; so they intimate plainly, that sometime our labour may be lost, and our purpose defeated; and that by the default of others it may be impossible we should arrive to a peaceable condition of life with all men. However, by this rule we are directed not only ourselves not to infringe the terms of peace toward others, but to endeavour earnestly by all honest and prudent means to obtain the good-will, favour, and respect of others, by which they may be disposed to all friendly correspondence with us, and not to disturb the quiet and tranquillity of our lives.

Having thus by way of explication superficially glanced upon the words, we will proceed to a more large and punctual review of them; and shall consider more distinctly the particulars grossly mentioned: and,

I. What those especial duties are, included in this more comprehensive one of living peaceably with all men; both those which are directly required of us, as the necessary causes or immediate results of a peaceable disposition in us towards others; and also those which are to be performed by us, as just and reasonable means conducive to beget or preserve in others a peaceable inclination toward us: these I shall consider promiscuously; and,

1. We are by this precept directly obliged heartily to love, that is, to bear good-will to, to wish well to, to rejoice in the welfare, and commiserate the adversities,

of all men: at least not to hate, or bear ill-will to, to desire or design the harm, to repine at the happy success, or delight in the misfortunes of any: for as it is very hard to maintain peace and amicable correspondence with those we do not truly love, so it is absolutely impossible to do it long with those we hate: this satanic passion (or disposition of soul) always prompting the mind possessed therewith to the contrivance and execution of mischief; whence he that hates his brother is said to be a murderer, as having in him that bitter root from whence, if power and occasion conspire, will probably spring that most extreme of outrages, and capital breach of peace³. Love is the only sure cement that knits and combines men in friendly society; and hatred the certain fountain of that violence which rends and dissolves it. We cannot easily hurt or strive with those we love and wish well to: we cannot possibly long agree with those we hate and malign. Peace without love can be esteemed little more than politic dissimulation; and peace with hatred is really nothing less than an artificial disguise, or an insidious covert of enmity.

2. We are hence obliged to perform all kind offices of humanity, which the condition of any man can require, and may by us be performed without considerable inconvenience or detriment to ourselves or others. When, for the preservation or comfortable accommodation of life, they need our help or our advice, we are readily to afford them; when they are in want or distress, we are to minister to them what comfort and relief we can. We are, upon this very score, to obey that injunction of St. Paul to the Galatians, *As we have opportunity let us do good to all men*⁴. For without this beneficence, a man's carriage (though otherwise harmless and inoffensive) appears rather a suspicious strangeness, than a peaceable demeanour, and naturally produces an enmity in those that are concerned in it. For he, to whom, being pressed with necessity, requisite assistance is denied, will infallibly be apt to think himself not

³ 1 John iii. 15.

⁴ Gal. vi. 10.

only neglected and disesteemed, but affronted also, and injured; (need, in the general conceit of men, and especially of those that feel it, begetteth a kind of title to some competent relief;) and consequently will heinously resent, and complain bitterly of such supposed wrong; and, if ever he become able, repay it with advantage. And much more are we upon the same account not to perform ill offices toward any man; not to disturb him in the enjoyment of his innocent pleasure, nor to hinder him in the advancing his lawful profit, nor to interrupt him in the prosecution of his reasonable designs; nor anywise to vex and grieve him needlessly; and (above all) not to detain him in, nor to aggravate, his affliction. For these are actual violations of peace, and impediments of good correspondence among men. Further,

3. In this duty of living peaceably is included an obligation to all kind of just and honest dealing with all men; punctually to observe contracts, impartially to decide controversies, equally to distribute rewards, to injure no man either in his estate, by violent or fraudulent encroachments upon his just possessions; or in his reputation, by raising or dispersing slanderous reports concerning him: for these courses of all others are most destructive to peace, and upon the pretence of them most quarrels that ever were have been commenced.

Justice in its own nature is, and by the common agreement of men hath been designed, the guardian of peace and sovereign remedy of contention. But, not to insist long upon such obvious subjects,

4. It much conduceth to the preservation of peace, and upholding amicable correspondence in our dealings and transactions with men liable to doubt and debate, not to insist upon nice and rigorous points of right, not to take all advantage offered us, not to deal hard measure, not to use extremities, to the damage or hindrance of others, especially when no comparable benefit will thence accrue to ourselves. For such proceedings, as they discover in us little kindness

to, or tenderness of our neighbour's good, so they exceedingly exasperate them, and persuade them we are their enemies, and render them ours, and so utterly destroy peace between us⁵. Whenas abating something from the height and strictness of our pretences, and a favourable recession in such cases, will greatly engage men to have an honourable opinion and a peaceable affection toward us.

5. If we would attain to this peaceable estate of life, we must use toward all men such demonstrations of respect and courtesy, which according to their degree and station custom doth entitle them to, or which upon the common score of humanity they may be reasonably deemed to expect from us; respectful gestures, civil salutations, free access, affable demeanour, cheerful looks, and courteous discourse. These, as they betoken good-will in them that use them, so they beget, cherish, and increase it in those whom they refer to: and the necessary fruit of mutual good-will is peace. But the contrary carriages,—contemptuous or disregardful behaviour, difficulty of admission to converse, a tetical or sullen aspect, rough and fastidious language—as they discover a mind averse from friendly commerce, so they beget a more potent disdain in others; men generally (especially those of generous and hearty temper) valuing their due respect beyond all other interests, and more contentedly brooking injury than neglect. Whence this skill and dexterity of deportment, (though immediately, and in its own nature, of no great worth, and regulating actions of small importance, gestures, looks, and forms of speech,) yet because it is a nurse of peace, and greatly contributes to the delightfulness of society, hath been always much commended, and hath obtained a conspicuous place in the honourable rank of virtues, under the titles of courtesy, comity, and affability; and the opposites thereto, rudeness and rusticity, have been deservedly counted and called vices in morality.

6. This precept directly prohibits the use of all reproachful, scornful, and provoking language; these

⁵ Vide Tit. iii. 2.—ἀμάχους εἶναι, ἐπεικεῖς.

being the immediate results of enmity, and actual breaches of peace. Whence St. Paul conjoins, Μηδένα βλασφημεῖν and ἀμάχους εἶναι, *To speak evil of no man, to be no quarrellers* (or fighters), *but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men*⁶. For war is managed (and that with more deadly animosity) with the tongue, as well as with the hand. (*There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword*, saith Solomon; and *whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword*, saith David⁷.) Words are with more anguish felt than blows; their wounds are more incurable, and they leave a deeper scar⁸. Men usually dread more the loss of their honour than their lives, and take more grievously the ravishing of their credit than the depredation of their estate. Living peaceably, therefore, implies as much abstaining from opprobrious words as injurious actions: yea, more; for reviling is not only a violation of peace, but a dishonourable waging of war; like shooting arrows dipt in poison, and discharging slugs against our neighbour's reputation⁹: practices condemned by all as base and inhuman, and contrary to the laws of a noble warfare; being arguments, we affect rather our adversary's utter ruin, than a gallant victory over him. There be fair ways of disputing our cause, without contumelious reflections upon persons; and the errors of men may be sufficiently refuted without satirical virulency. One good reason, modestly propounded, hath in it naturally more power and efficacy to convince him that is in a mistake, or to confound him with shame that is guilty of a fault, than ten thousand scoffs and ignominious taunts. When we are to express those deeds of nature (the performance of which is concealed, as containing in it something of supposed turpitude), we are wont to veil them in such modest circumlo-

⁶ Tit. iii. 2.

⁷ Prov. xii. 18; Ps. lvii. 4; lxiv. 3; Prov. xviii. 8.

⁸ Ποταπὸν δὲ χρῆμα λοιδορία; ὡς θυμοδακῆς ἀληθῶς, καὶ ἀμυστον ψυχὴν μάλλον ἢ σιεήρως χροῦται.—Jul. 2. Orat.

⁹ Ζῆλος γὰρ συγγνώμης ἀπεστερημένος οὐ ζῆλος, ἀλλὰ θυμὸς μάλλον ἐστίν, καὶ νοθεσία φιλανθρωπίας οὐκ ἔχουσα, βασκανία τις εἶναι δοκεῖ.—Chrys. tom. v. p. 32.

cutions, that by the hearers without offence to their bashfulness may sufficiently be understood¹. So when it is needful or expedient to confute the opinions or reprove the actions of men, if we either charitably design their amendment, or desire to maintain peaceable correspondence with them, it behoves that we do not, by using the most broad and distasteful language, immoderately trespass upon their modesty and patience; that (to use Seneca's phrase) we do *agere curam non tantum salutis, sed et honestæ cicatricis*; De Clem. i. c. 17: *Have a care not only to cure the wound, but to leave a comely scar*, and not to deform him whom we endeavour to reform; for no sore is the easilier cured for being roughly handled, and least of all those in manners and opinion. A soft hand, and a tender heart, and a gentle tongue, are most convenient qualities of a spiritual surgeon². But further to this purpose,

7. If we desire to live peaceably with all men, we are to be equal in censuring men's actions, candid in interpreting their meanings, mild in reprehending, and sparing to relate their miscarriages, to derive their actions from the best principles, (from which, in the judgment of charity, they may be supposed to proceed, as from casual mistake rather than from wilful prejudice, from human infirmity rather than from malicious design,) to construe ambiguous expressions to the most favourable sense they may admit; not to condemn men's practices, without distinct knowledge of the case, and examining the reasons, which possibly may absolve or excuse them: to extenuate their acknowledged faults by such circumstances as aptly serve that purpose, and not to exaggerate them by strained consequences, or uncertain conjectures: to rebuke them (if need be) so as they may perceive we sincerely pity their errors, and tender their good, and wish nothing more than their recovery, and do not design to upbraid, deride, or insult over them, being fallen³; and finally, not to recount their misdeeds over-frequently, unseasonably, and

¹ Vide egregium Antonini locum, lib. xi. § 18. 9. — ἀδὴκτως.

² Prov. xv. 1.

³ Prov. xvii. 9.

with complacence. He that thus demeaneth himself, manifestly sheweth himself to prize his neighbour's good-will, and to be desirous to continue in amity with him; and assuredly obliges him to be in the same manner affected toward him. But he that is rigidly severe and censorious in his judgments, blaming in them things indifferent, condemning actions allowable, detracting from qualities commendable, deducing men's doings from the worst causes, and imputing them to the worst ends, and representing them under the most odious appellations; that calls all impositions of superiors which he dislikes, tyranny, and all manners of divine worship that suit not to his fancy, superstition, and all pretences to conscience in those that dissent from him, hypocrisy, and all opinions different from his, heresy; that is suspicious of ill intention without sufficient ground, and prejudicates men's meanings before he well apprehends them, and captiously perverts sayings capable of good construction; that is curiously inquisitive into his neighbour's life, and gladly observes failings therein, and upon all occasions recites stories to his disgrace and disadvantage; that is immoderately bitter, fierce, and vehement, in accusing and inveighing against others, painting such as he assumes to impugn, with the blackest colours, in the most horrid shape and ugly dress, converting all matter of discourse (though never so unseasonably and impertinently) into declamation, and therein copiously expatiating¹; in fine, employing his utmost might of wit and eloquence and confidence, in rendering them to others as hateful as he signifies they are to himself: such men, what do they else but loudly proclaim that they despise their neighbour's good-will, purposely provoke his anger, and defy his utmost enmity? For it is impossible such dealing should not, by them who are therein concerned, be accounted extremely unjust, and to proceed from desperate hatred.

8. He that would effectually observe this apostolic

¹ That flies like a vulture to carrion only.—*Plut. de Util. cap. ex inim.* Prov. xvii. 9; xxiv. 17.

rule, must be disposed to overlook such lesser faults committed against him as make no great breach upon his interest or credit; yea, to forget or forgive the greatest and most grievous injuries; to excuse the mistakes, and connive at the neglects, and bear patiently the hasty passions of his neighbour, and to embrace readily any seasonable overture, and accept any tolerable conditions of reconciliation⁵. For even in common life that observation of our Saviour most exactly holds, *It is impossible that offences should not come*; the air may sooner become wholly fixed, and the sea continue in a perfect rest, without waves or undulations, than human conversation be altogether free from occasions of distaste, which he that cannot either prudently dissemble, or patiently digest, must renounce all hopes of living peaceably here. He that like tinder is inflammable by the least spark, and is enraged by every angry word, and resents deeply every petty affront, and cannot endure the memory of a past unkindness should upon any terms be defaced, resolves surely to live in eternal tumult and combustion, to multiply daily upon himself fresh quarrels, and to perpetuate all enmity already begun. Whenas by total passing by those little causes of disgust, the present contention is altogether avoided, or instantly appeased, our neighbour's passion suddenly evaporates and consumes itself; no remarkable footsteps of dissension remain; our neighbour, reflecting upon what is past, sees himself obliged by our discreet forbearance, however all possible means are used to prevent trouble and preserve peace. To this purpose, *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression*, saith Solomon: and, *He that covereth a transgression seeketh love*, saith the same wise prince⁶. But further,

⁵ Sen. Ben. vii. 31. Vincit malos pertinax bonitas. Νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν.—Rom. xii. 21.

Irascitur aliquis? tu contra beneficiis provoca: cadit statim similtas ab altera parte deserta; nisi par non pugnat: si utrinque certabitur, ille est melior qui prior pedem retulit; victus est qui vicit.—Sen. de Ira, ii. 34.

⁶ Prov. xix. 11; xvii. 9.

9. If we would live peaceably with all men, we must not **over-highly** value ourselves, nor over-cagerly pursue our **own things**. We must not admire our own endowments, nor insist upon our deserts; for this will make us **apt to depreciate others**, and them to loathe us. We must not be over tender of our credit, and covetous of **respect**; for this will render us apt to take exceptions, and engage us in troublesome competitions for superiority of place, and pre-eminence in the vain opinions of men. *He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: and Only* (i. e. chiefly) *from pride cometh contention*, saith Solomon⁷. We must not be much addicted to our own interests, for this will dispose us to encroach upon the concerns of others, and them to resist our attempts; whence conflict and enmity will necessarily arise. We must not prefer our own judgments, and imperiously obtrude them upon others; nor be pertinacious in persuading them to embrace our private opinions, nor violently urgent to a compliance with our humour. For these things are intolerably fastidious in conversation, and obnoxious to be charged with usurpation and iniquity; all men naturally challenging to themselves an equal, or at least a proportionable share of reason, together with the free conduct of their lives, uncontrollable by private dictates. If therefore we desire to live quietly, and not needlessly to disoblige or displease others, we should be modest in esteeming our own abilities, and moderate in pursuing our own advantages, and in our converse not less complacent to others than we desire they should be to us; and as liberal in allowing leave to dissent from us, as we are bold in taking freedom to abound in our own sense. And if in debate a modest declaration of our opinion, and the reasons inducing us thereto, will not prevail, it behoves us to give over such a successless combat, and to retire into the silent enjoyment of our own thoughts. From not observing which rule, discourse grows into contention, and contention improves into feud and enmity.

⁷ Prov. xxviii. 25; xiii. 10.

10. If we would live peaceably, it concerns us to abstain from needless contests about matters of opinion, and questions, either merely vain and frivolous, of little use or concernment, or over nice and subtle, and thence indeterminable by reason; or that are agitated with extraordinary eagerness and heat of passion; or such as are already defined by general consent; or such upon the decision of which the public peace and safety do depend. There are some controversies prickly, like brambles, and apt to scratch those that handle them, but yielding no savoury or wholesome fruit: such as concern the consequences of imaginary suppositions, the state and circumstances of beings to us unknown, the right application of artificial terms, and the like impertinent matters; which serve to no other purpose but the exercise of curious wits, and exciting emulation among them. Others there be concerning matters of more weighty moment, yet having the resolution depending upon secrets unsearchable, or the interpretation of ambiguous words and obscure phrases, or upon some other uncertain conjectures; and are yet rendered more difficult by being entangled with inextricable folds of subtilty, nice distinctions, and crafty evasions, devised by the parties engaged in them for the maintenance of their causes respectively⁸; whence it hath happened, though with immense care and diligence of both parts they have been long canvassed, that yet they do, and in all probability will for ever, remain undecided. So that now to engage in contests about them may be reasonably deemed nothing more than a wilful mispense of our time, labour, and good humour, by vainly reciprocating the saw of endless contention. Other questions there be, in themselves of more easy resolution, and of considerable importance, which yet by extreme opposition of parties are so clouded and overgrown with insuperable prejudices, that the disputing them is seldom attended with other success than an inflaming our-

⁸ Non amplius inveniri licet quam quod a Deo discitur.—*Tertull. de Anim. cap. 2.*

selves and others with passion. Others are by small and obscure parties managed against the common consent, and against the positive decrees of the most venerable authorities among men, by ventilating which, as truth is like to gain little, so peace is sure to suffer much. For as it is nowise a safe or advised course (except in case of necessary defence) to subject received opinions to the hazardous trial of a tumultuary conflict, their credit being better upheld by a stately reservedness than by a popular forwardness of discourse; as buildings stand fastest that are never shaken, and those possessions remain most secure that are never called in question; so, on the other hand, to countenance new and uncouth paradoxes, as it argues too much arrogance and presumption in confronting our single apprehensions against the deliberate sense and suffrage of so many men, yea, so many ages of men; and is likely to prove a successless attempt, like swimming against the current, accompanied with much toil and little progress; so it serves no good end, but only foment divisions, and disturbs both our private and the public peace. But most of all we are to be cautelous of meddling with controversies of dangerous consequence, wherein the public weal and quiet are concerned, which bare the roots of sacred authority, and prostitute the mysteries of government to vulgar inspection. Such points ought to be subjects of law, not of syllogism, and the errors in them to be corrected by punishment, rather than confuted by argument: neither can it be thought reasonable that the interest of public peace should depend upon the event of private disputation⁹. It concerns us, therefore, if we would live peaceably in such disputable matters, reserving all due reverence to the judgments of the most, the best, and wisest persons, to be content in a modest privacy to enjoy the results of a serious and impartial disquisition, patiently enduring others to dissent from us, and not attempting by need-

⁹ Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀποροῦντες πότερον δεῖ τοὺς θεοὺς τιμᾶν, καὶ τοὺς γονεῖς ἀγαπᾶν, ἢ οὐ, κολάσεως δέονται· οἱ δὲ πότερον ἢ χιῶν λευκή, ἢ οὐ, αἰσθήσεως.—Arist. Top. i. 8.

less, fruitless, and endless contentions, to gain others to our persuasions; especially since the truth contended for may not be worth the passion employed upon it, and the benefits of the victory not countervail the prejudices sustained in the combat. For goodness and virtue may often consist with ignorance and error, seldom with strife and discord. And this consideration I shall conclude with those exhortations of St. Paul, Tit. iii. 9: *But foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and law-contests, decline; for they are unprofitable and vain.* And in 2 Ep. to Tim. ii. 23—25: *But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they gender strifes; and the servant of the Lord (that is, a minister of religion) must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that are contrarily disposed*¹. And in the same chapter, ver. 14: *Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, to the subverting of the hearers*: of so pernicious consequence did St. Paul esteem unnecessary wrangling and disputing to be. But further,

11. If we desire to live peaceably, we must restrain our pragmatistical curiosity within the bounds of our proper business and concernment, not [being *curiosi in aliena republ.*] invading other men's provinces, and without leave or commission intermeddling with their affairs²; not rushing into their closets, prying into their concealed designs, or dictating counsel to them without due invitation thereto; not controlling their actions, nor subjecting their proceedings to our censure, without competent authority. For these courses men usually look upon as rash intrusions, both injurious and reproachful to them, usurping upon that freedom of choice which all men passionately affect to preserve entire to themselves, and arguing them of weakness

¹ Τοὺς ἀντιδιαρθεμένους.

² According to St. Paul's advice, 1 Thess. iv. 11. *Strive (or be ambitious) to be quiet, and to mind your own business.* (Φιλοτιμῆσθαι ἡσυχάζειν, καὶ πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια.)

and incapacity to manage their own business: neither do men more naturally drive away flies that buzz about their ears, and molest them in their employments, than they with disdain repel such immodest and unseasonable meddlers in their affairs. Let no man suffer, saith St. Peter, *as a busybody in other men's matters*³; intimating, that those who are impertinently inquisitive into other men's matters, make themselves liable to suffer (and that deservedly) for their fond curiosity and bold presumption. And, *He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears*⁴, saith Solomon; that is, he catcheth at that which he cannot hold, and vainly aims at that which he cannot effect, and rashly irritates those which will turn upon him and bite him. If, therefore, we would neither molest others, nor be disquieted ourselves, we must be like natural agents, never working aught beyond our proper sphere of activity. But especially, if we desire to live peaceably, we must beware of assuming to ourselves a liberty to censure the designs, decrees, or transactions of public authority, and of saying to our superiors, What doest thou? and much more, by querulous murmurings or clamorous declamations, of bringing envy and odium upon them. Few private men are capable of judging aright concerning those things, as being placed beneath in a valley, and wanting a due prospect upon the ground and causes of their proceedings, who by reason of their eminent station can see more and further than they; and therefore are incompetent judges, and unjustly presume to interpose their sentence in such cases. But suppose the actions of superiors notoriously blameable and scandalous, and that by infallible arguments we are persuaded thereof; yet seeing neither the taxing of, nor complaint against them doth in anywise regularly belong to us, nor the discovery of our mind therein can probably be an efficacious means of procuring redress, and immediately tends to diminish the reputation and

³ 1 Pet. iv. 15.

⁴ Prov. xxvi. 17.

weaken the affection due to government, and consequently to impair the peaceable estate of things which by them is sustained, we are wholly to abstain from such unwarrantable, unprofitable, and turbulent practices; and with a submiss and discreet silence, passing over the miscarriages of our superiors, to wait patiently upon the providence, and implore the assistance of Him, who is the only competent Judge of such, and sovereign Disposer of all things, who hath their hearts in his hands, and fashioneth them as he thinks good⁵. Further,

12. If we would live peaceably with all men, it behoves us not to engage ourselves so deeply in any singular friendship, or in devotion to any one party of men, as to be entirely partial to their interests, and prejudiced in their behalf, without distinct consideration of the truth and equity of their pretences in the particular matters of difference; not to approve, favour, or applaud that which is bad in some; to dislike, discountenance, or disparage that which is good in others: not, out of excessive kindness to some, to give just cause of distaste to others: not, for the sake of a fortuitous agreement in disposition, opinion, interest, or relation, to violate the duties of justice or humanity. For he that upon such terms is a friend to any one man, or party of men, as to be resolved, with an implicit faith, or blind obedience, to maintain whatever he or they shall affirm to be true, and whatever they shall do to be good, doth in a manner undertake enmity against all men beside, and, as it may happen, doth oblige himself to contradict plain truth, to deviate from the rules of virtue, and to offend Almighty God himself. This unlimited partiality we owe only to truth and goodness, and to God (the fountain of them), in no case to swerve from their dictates and prescriptions. He that followed Tiberius Gracchus in his seditious practices, upon the bare account of friendship, and alleged in his excuse, that, if his friend had required it

⁵ Prov. xxi. 1 ; xxxiii. 15.

of him, he should as readily have put fire to the Capitol, was much more abominable for his disloyalty to his country, and horrible impiety against God, than commendable for his constant fidelity to his friend⁶. And that soldier which is said to have told Cæsar (in his first expedition against Rome), that in obedience to his commands he would not refuse to sheathe his sword in the breast of his brother, or in the throat of his aged father, or in the bowels of his pregnant mother, was for his unnatural barbarity rather to be abhorred, than to be esteemed for his loyal affection to his general⁷. And in like manner, he that, to please or gratify the humour of his friend, can be either injurious, or treacherous, or notably discourteous to any man else, is very blameable, and renders himself deservedly odious to all others⁸. Lælius, who incomparably well both understood and practised the rules of friendship, is by Cicero reported to have made this the first and chief law thereof: *Ut neque rogemus res turpes, nec faciamus rogati*: *That we neither require of our friends the performance of base and naughty things; nor, being requested of them, perform such ourselves*⁹. And in the heraldry, or comparison of duties, as all others must give place to those of piety, verity, and virtue, so after them the duties of humanity justly challenge the next place of respect, even above those which belong to the highest degree of friendship (due to our nearest relations, yea, to our country itself), precisely taken, abstracted and distinguished from those of humanity. For the world is in nature the first, the most comprehensive, and dearest country of us all; and our general obligations to mankind are more ancient, more fundamental, and more indispensable, than those particular ones superadded to, or superstructed on them. The peace therefore of the world, and the general welfare of men its citizens, ought to be more dear to us, and

⁶ Cic. in Lælio.

⁷ Luc. lib. i.

⁸ Prov. xxiv. 24.—“He that saith to the wicked, Thou art righteous, him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him.”

⁹ Cic. in Lælio.

the means conducing thereto more carefully regarded by us in our actions, than either the love, favour, or satisfaction of any particular persons is to be valued or pursued. And the not observing this rule may reasonably be esteemed to have a great influence upon the continuance of those implacable feuds and dissensions, wherewith the world is so miserably torn and shattered. Men being peremptorily resolved to extol, countenance, or excuse promiscuously all the principles and proceedings of the party to which they have addicted themselves, and to see no error, fault, or abuse in them; but by all means to depress, vilify, and condemn (if not to reproach, calumniate, and persecute) the opinions and practices of others, and not to acknowledge in them any thing considerably good or commendable; whence commonly all apprehend their adversaries extremely unjust and disingenuous towards them, and are alienated from all thoughts (or, however, discouraged from all hopes) of friendly accommodation and reconciliation. But he, that would live peaceably with all men, must be free in his judgment, impartial in his dealing, and ingenuous in his carriage toward all: not θαυμάζων πρόσωπα, admiring or wondering at some men (as if they were impeccable or infallible), nor having the truth in respect of persons, abetting in his friends only what is just and true, and allowing the same in others, but in neither by signal approbation countenancing any thing false or evil¹; for so demeaning himself, he giveth no man just occasion of displeasure or enmity against him.

13. If we would live peaceably ourselves, we should endeavour to preserve peace, and prevent differences, and reconcile dissensions among others, by doing good offices, and making fair representations of intercurrent passages between them; by concealing causes of future disgust, and removing present misunderstandings, and excusing past mistakes; by allaying their passions, and rightly informing their minds, by friendly intercessions,

¹ Jude 16; James ii. 1.

and pacific advices. For the fire that devourcth our neighbour's house threateneth and endangereth ours; and it is hard to approach contention, without being engaged therein. 'Tis not easy to keep ourselves indifferent or neutral; and doing so we shall in likelihood be maligned and persecuted by both the contending parties. *Blessed are the peacemakers* (saith our Saviour), *for they shall be called the sons of God*²; that is, they shall be highly esteemed and revered for this divine quality, wherein they so nearly resemble the God of peace, and his blessed Son the great Mediator. But further, without respect to other recompense, and from the nature of their employment, such are immediately happy, and in this their virtuous practice rewards itself, that by appeasing others' quarrels, they save themselves from trouble, and enjoy themselves that tranquillity which they procure to others³. But those informing sycophants, those inter-nuncios of pestilent tales, and incendiaries of discord, that (from bad nature, or upon base design) by the still breath of clandestine whispers, or by the more violent blasts of impudent calumnies, kindle the flames of dissension, or foment them among others; that by disseminating infamous rumours, and by malicious suggestions, instil jealousies into, and nourish malevolent surmises in the minds of men, *separating*, as it is in the Proverbs, *between chief friends*⁴, and widening the distance between others: these, I say, from the seeds of variance they scatter among others, reap in the end mischief and disturbance to themselves; nor can expect to enjoy the benefit of that quiet, which they labour to deprive others of. *The beginning of strife* (saith Solomon) *is as when one letteth out water*⁵; and he that, to the intent his neighbour's land should be overflown with a torrent of dissension, doth unloose the dams, and cut the banks of former friendship, may (if he be wise)

² Matt. v. 9.

³ "To the counsellors of peace is joy."—Prov. xii. 20.

⁴ Prov. xvi. 28.

⁵ Prov. xvii. 14.

expect the merciless flood should at length reach himself, and that his own habitation should be at last surrounded therewith⁶. For when men at length begin to be weary, and to repent of their needless quarrels, and the mischievous consequences attending them, and to be inquisitive into the causes and instruments of their vexation, they will certainly find out, detest, and invert the edge of their displeasure upon these wretched makebates; and so the poison they mingled for others they themselves drink up⁷; the catastrophe of the tragedy (begun by them) is acted upon themselves; they sink down into the pit they made for others, and in the net which they hid is their own foot taken: *Et delator habet quod dedit exitium*.

Lastly, If we would effectually observe this precept, we must readily comply with the innocent customs, and obey the established laws of the places where we live. I say, first comply with the customs; which also are in effect inferior laws enacted by the tacit agreement of the generality of men; the non-observation of which is upon many accounts very prejudicial to peaceable life. For to those concerned in it, it will always seem to intimate a squeamish niceness, a froward perverseness, an arrogant self-conceitedness, a manifest despising other men's judgments, and a virtual condemning their practices of fault or folly, and consequently a monopolizing all goodness, and appropriating all wisdom to himself; qualities intolerably odious to men, and productive of enmity. It incenses the people (hugely susceptible of provocation) with a sense of notable injury done, and contempt cast upon it. For the only authority which the commonalty can lay claim to, consists in prescribing rules of decency in language, habit, gesture, ceremony, and other circumstances of action, declared and ratified by ordinary practice; non-conformity to which is by them adjudged a marvellous

⁶ Prov. xxv. 8.

⁷ *Vide* Prov. xi. 27.—“He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour; but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come upon him.”

irregularity, contumacy, and rebellion against the majesty of the people, and is infallibly revenged and punished by them.

There is no preserving peace, nor preventing broils and stirs, but by punctually observing that ordinary rule of equity, that in cases of doubtful debate, and points of controverted practice, the fewest should yield to the most, the weakest bend to the strongest, and that to the greatest number should be allowed at least the greatest appearance of reason. To which purpose we may observe, that the best and wisest men (not to displease those with whom they conversed, as far as their duty to God and their conscience would permit), have commonly in their manners of life followed not what in their retired judgment they most approved, but what suited to the customs of their times and places, avoiding a morose singularity, as offensive to others, and productive of disquiet to themselves⁸. You know how Cicero censured Cato for endeavouring, against the grain and predominant genius of those times, to reduce things to a strict agreement with his private notions: *Ille optimo animo utens, et summa fide, nocet interdum reipublicæ. Dicit enim tanquam in Platonis πολιτεία, non tanquam in Romuli fæce sententiam*⁹. But a more clear and pertinent instance we have in St. Paul, who thus represents his own practice: *I have made myself a servant to all: Unto the Jews I became as a Jew; to them that are without law, as without law: To the weak became I as weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some*¹. St. Paul wisely knew², that, by a prudent compliance with men's customs, and condescension to their capacities, he engaged to him, or at least did not alienate from him, their affections; and thereby be-

⁸ Id agamus, ut meliorem vitam sequamur quam vulgus, non ut contrariam; alioqui quos emendari volumus fugamus et a nobis avertimus.

Temperetur vita inter bonos mores et publicos, &c.—Sen. Ep. 5.

⁹ Epist. ad Att. lib. ii. Ep. i.

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21, 22; x. 33.

² Vide Acts xxi.

came more capable of infusing good doctrine into their minds, and promoting their spiritual good. And the same course was generally taken by the primitive Christians, who in all things (not inconsistent with the rules and principles of their religion) did industriously conform their conversation to the usual practices of men; thereby shunning those scandalous imputations of pride and perverseness, which then rendered the Jews so odious to the world, as appears by divers passages in the ancient apologists for Christian religion: particularly Justin Martyr (in his Epistle to Diognetus) hath these words: Χριστιανοὶ γὰρ οὔτε γῆ, οὔτε φωνῇ, οὔτε ἔθει διακεκριμένοι τῶν λοιπῶν εἰσιν ἀνθρώπων· οὔτε γάρ που πόλεις ἰδίας κατοικοῦσιν, οὔτε διαλέκτῳ τινὶ παρηλλαγμένην χρῶνται, οὔτε βίον παράσημον ἀσκοῦσιν—κατοικοῦντες δὲ πόλεις Ἑλληνικὰς τε καὶ βαρβάρους, ὡς ἕκαστος ἐκληρώθη, ἐν ταῖς ἐγχωρίοις ἔθουσιν ἀκολουθοῦντες, &c. *The Christians neither in dwelling, language, nor customs, differ from the rest of men; they neither inhabit towns proper to themselves, nor use any peculiar dialect, nor exercise an uncouth manner of living; but, as by chance it is allotted to them, inhabiting cities belonging both to Greeks and Barbarians, comply with the customs of the country.* And much more hath he there; and much Tertullian likewise, in his Apologetic, to the same purpose. Neither do we find in the life of our Saviour, that exact pattern of wisdom and goodness, that in any thing he did affect to differ from the received customs of his time and country, except such as were grounded upon vain conceits, extremely prejudicial to piety, or directly repugnant thereto.

And I cannot except from this rule the compliance with religious customs used in the worship and service of God: since a wilful discrepancy from them doth much more destroy peace, and kindle the flame of contention, inasmuch as men are apt to apprehend themselves much more slighted and more condemned by a disagreement in those, than in matters of lesser concernment. And it cannot reasonably be imagined, that the God of love and peace, who questionless de-

lights to see men converse in peace and amity, and who therefore in general terms enjoins us to pursue the things that make for peace (whereof certainly in reason and to experience, following indifferent and harmless customs, not expressly repugnant to his law, nor to the dictates of natural reason, is one thing, and not the least), in our addresses to himself (partly designed and mainly serving more strictly to unite, not to dissociate men in affection) should dislike or disapprove the use of this course, so expedient and conducive to peace³: especially since he infinitely more regards the substance of the duty, and the devotion of the heart therein, than the manner, or any circumstantial appendages thereof: it is certain, however, that St. Paul intimates a wilful departure from ordinary practice in such cases, to proceed from a contentious disposition: *But if any man* (saith he) *have a mind to be contentious* (so δοκεῖ φιλόνηκος εἶναι imports), *we have no such custom, nor the churches of God*⁴.

But yet much more is peaceable conversation impeached by disobedience to established laws, those great bulwarks of society, fences of order, and supports of peace; which he that refuses to obey, is so far from living peaceably with all men, that he may reasonably be presumed unwilling to have peace with any man; since in a manner he defies all mankind, vilifies its most solemn judgments, endeavours to dissolve those sacred bands by which its union is contained, and to subvert the only foundations of public tranquillity. He declares himself either to affect an universal tyranny over, or an abhorrency from society with other men, to be unwilling to live with them upon equal terms, or to submit to any fair arbitration, to desire that strifes should be endless, and controversies never decided, who declines the verdict of law, the most solemn issue of deliberate advice, proceeding from the most honourable, most wise, most worthy, and select persons, and involving in it the consent of the whole commonwealth.

³ Rom. xiv. 19.

⁴ 1 Cor. xi. 16.

St. Paul, directing that prayers should be made for princes and those in authority, assigns the reason, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty*^s : and certainly if we are to pray for, we are also obliged to obey them in order to the same end ; which to do is absolutely in our power, and more immediately requisite to that purpose. For as no peace can be preserved without the influence of authority ; so no authority can subsist without obedience to its sanctions. He that is desirous to enjoy the privileges of this happy estate of peace, must in reason be content to perform the duties enjoined, and bear the common burdens imposed by those who are the protectors of it.

Thus, as plainly as I could, have I described what it is to live peaceably, and what the means are that principally conduce thereto : I should now proceed to consider the object of the duty, and the reasons why it respects all men ; as also whence it comes, that sometimes we may fail in our endeavour of attaining this desirable condition ; and lastly, to propound some inducements persuasive of its practice. But I must not further encroach on your patience, and shall therefore reserve these things to the next opportunity.

Now the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord ; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

^s 1 Tim. ii. 2.

SERMON XII.

OF SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

LUKE xxii. 42.

“ Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done ¹. ”

THE great controversy, managed with such earnestness and obstinacy between God and man, is this, whose will shall take place, his or ours. Almighty God, by whose constant protection and great mercy we subsist, doth claim to himself the authority of regulating our practice and disposing our fortunes: but we affect to be our own masters and carvers; not willingly admitting any law, not patiently brooking any condition, which doth not sort with our fancy and pleasure. To make good his right, God bendeth all his forces, and applieth all proper means both of sweetness and severity (persuading us by arguments, soliciting us by entreaties, alluring us by fair promises, scaring us by fierce menaces, indulging ample benefits to us, inflicting sore corrections on us, working in us and upon us by secret influences of grace, by visible dispensations of Providence); yet so it is, that commonly nothing doth avail, our will opposing itself with invincible resolution and stiffness.

Here indeed the business pincheth; herein as the chief worth, so the main difficulty of religious practice consisteth, in bending *that iron sinew*; in bringing our

¹ Matt. xxvi. 39.

proud hearts to stoop, and our sturdy humours to buckle, so as to surrender and resign our wills to the just, the wise, the gracious will of our God, prescribing our duty, and assigning our lot unto us. We may accuse our nature, but it is our pleasure; we may pretend weakness, but it is wilfulness, which is the guilty cause of our misdemeanours; for by God's help (which doth always prevent our needs, and is never wanting to those who seriously desire it) we may be as good as we please, if we can please to be good²; there is nothing within us that can resist, if our wills do yield themselves up to duty: to conquer our reason is not hard; for what reason of man can withstand the infinite cogency of those motives which induce to obedience? What can be more easy, than by a thousand arguments, clear as day, to convince any man, that to cross God's will, is the greatest absurdity in the world, and that there is no madness comparable thereto? Nor is it difficult, if we resolve upon it, to govern any other part or power of our nature³; for what cannot we do, if we are willing? What inclination cannot we check, what appetite cannot we restrain, what passion cannot we quell or moderate? What faculty of our soul, or member of our body, is not obsequious to our will? Even half the resolution with which we pursue vanity and sin, would serve to engage us in the ways of wisdom and virtue.

Wherefore, in overcoming our will the stress lieth; this is that impregnable fortress, which everlastingly doth hold out against all the batteries of reason and of grace; which no force of persuasion, no allurements of favour, no discouragement of terror, can reduce: this puny, this impotent thing it is, which grappleth with Omnipotency, and often in a manner baffleth it: and no wonder, for that God doth not intend to overpower our will, or to make any violent impression on it, but only to *draw it* (as it is in the prophet) *with the cords of a man*⁴, or by rational inducements to win its con-

² Chrys. tom. vi. Or. 12, in 1 Cor. Or. 17, tom. v. Or. 28. 43.

³ Quodcumque sibi imperavit animus obtinuit.—Sen. *de Ira*, ii. 12.

⁴ Hos. xi. 4.

sent and compliance: our service is not so considerable to him, that he should extort it from us; nor doth he value our happiness at so low a rate, as to obtrude it on us. His victory indeed were no true victory over us, if he should gain it by main force, or without the concurrence of our will; our works not being our works, if they do not issue from our will; and our will not being our will, if it be not free: to compel it, were to destroy it, together with all the worth of our virtue and obedience: wherefore the Almighty doth suffer himself to be withstood, and beareth repulses from us; nor commonly doth he master our will otherwise than by its own spontaneous conversion and submission to him^s: if ever we be conquered, as we shall share in the benefit, and wear a crown; so we must join in the combat, and partake of the victory, by subduing ourselves: *we must take the yoke upon us*; for God is only served by volunteers; he summoneth us by his word, he attracteth us by his grace, but we must *freely come unto him*.

Our will, indeed, of all things, is most our own; the only gift, the most proper sacrifice, we have to offer; which therefore God doth chiefly desire, doth most highly prize, doth most kindly accept from us. Seeing, then, our duty chiefly moveth on this hinge, the free submission and resignation of our will to the will of God; it is this practice which our Lord (who came to guide us in the way to happiness, not only as a teacher by his word and excellent doctrine, but as a leader, by his actions and perfect example) did especially set before us, as in the constant tenor of his life, so particularly in that great exigency which occasioned these words, wherein, renouncing, and deprecating his own will, he did express an entire submission to God's will, a hearty complacency therein, and a serious desire that it might take place.

^s Ἐπεὶ τοῦτο καὶ αὐτὰ διαβάλλει τὰ ἀγαθὰ εἰ μὴ τοιαύτη αὐτῶν ἔστιν ἡ φύσις, ὥς καὶ ἐκόντας προσδραμεῖν, καὶ χάριν ἔχειν πολλήν.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. 2.

For the fuller understanding of which case, we may consider that our Lord, as partaker of our nature, and *in all things* (bating sin) *like unto us*, had a natural human will, attended with senses, appetites, and affections, apt from objects incident to receive congruous impressions of pleasure and pain; so that whatever is innocently grateful and pleasant to us, that he relished with delight, and thence did incline to embrace; whatever is distasteful and afflictive to us, that he resented with grief, and thence was moved to eschew: to this probably he was liable in a degree beyond our ordinary rate; for that in him nature was most perfect, his complexion very delicate, his temper exquisitely sound and fine; for so we find, that by how much any man's constitution is more sound, by so much he hath a smarter gust of what is agreeable or offensive to nature: if perhaps sometimes infirmity of body, or distemper of soul (a savage ferity, a stupid dulness, a fondness of conceit, or stiffness of humour, supported by wild opinions or vain hopes), may keep men from being thus affected by sensible objects; yet in him pure nature did work vigorously, with a clear apprehension and lively sense, according to the design of our Maker, when into our constitution he did implant those passive faculties, disposing objects to affect them so and so, for our need and advantage; if this be deemed weakness, it is a weakness connected with our nature, which he therewith did take, and *with which*, as the apostle saith, *he was encompassed* ⁶. Such a will our Lord had, and it was requisite that he should have it, that he thence might be qualified to discharge the principal instances of obedience, for procuring God's favour to us, and for setting an exact pattern before us; for God imposing on him duties to perform, and dispensing accidents to endure, very cross to that natural will, in his compliance and acquiescence thereto, his obedience was thoroughly tried; his virtue did shine most brightly; therefore as the apostle saith, *he was in all points*

⁶ Ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περικείται ἀσθένειαν.—Heb. v. 2.

tempted ; thence, as to meritorious capacity and exemplary influence, *he was perfected through suffering*⁷.

Hence was the whole course of his life and conversation among men so designed, so modelled, as to be one continual exercise of thwarting that human will, and closing with the divine pleasure: it was predicted of him, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God* ; and of himself he affirmed, *I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me*⁸ : whereas therefore such a practice is little seen in achieving easy matters, or in admitting pleasant occurrences ; it was ordered for him, that he should encounter the roughest difficulties, and be engaged in circumstances most harsh to natural apprehension and appetite ; so that if we trace the footsteps of his life, from the sordid manger to the bloody cross, we can hardly mark any thing to have befallen him apt to satisfy the will of nature. Nature liketh respect, and loatheth contempt ; therefore was he born of mean parentage, and in a most homely condition ; therefore did he live in no garb, did assume no office, did exercise no power, did meddle in no affairs, which procure to men consideration and regard ; therefore an impostor, a blasphemer, a sorcerer, a loose companion, a seditious incendiary, were the titles of honour and the eulogies of praise conferred on him ; therefore was he exposed to the lash of every slanderous, every scurrilous, every petulant and ungoverned tongue.

Nature doth affect the good opinion and good-will of men, especially when due in grateful return for great courtesy and beneficence ; nor doth any thing more grate thereon, than abuse of kindness : therefore could he (the world's great Friend and Benefactor) say, *the world hateth me*⁹ ; therefore were those, whom he, with so much charity and bounty, had instructed, had fed, had cured of diseases, (both corporal and spiritual,) so ready to clamour, and commit outrage upon him ;

⁷ Heb. iv. 15 ; ii. 10. 18.

⁸ Heb. x. 7 ; Ps. xl. 7 ; John vi. 38 ; v. 30 ; iv. 34.

⁹ John vii. 7.

therefore could he thus expostulate, *Many good works have I showed you from my Father ; for which of those works do ye stone me*¹ ? Therefore did his kindred slight him, therefore did his disciples abandon him, therefore did the grand traitor issue from his own bosom² ; therefore did that whole nation which he chiefly sought and laboured to save, conspire to persecute him with most rancorous spite and cruel misusage.

Nature loveth plentiful accommodations, and abhorreth to be pinched with any want : therefore was extreme penury appointed to him ; he had no revenue, no estate, no certain livelihood, not *so much as a house where to lay his head*, or a piece of money to discharge the tax for it³ ; he owed his ordinary support to alms, or voluntary beneficence ; he was to seek his food from a *fig-tree on the way* ; and sometimes was beholden for it to the courtesy of publicans ; δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπρώχενσε, *he was* (saith St. Paul) *a beggar for us*⁴.

Nature delighteth in ease, in quiet, in liberty : therefore did he spend his days in continual labour, in restless travel, in endless vagrancy, *going about and doing good* ; ever hastening thither, whither the needs of men did call, or their benefit invite ; therefore did he *take on him the form of a servant*, and was among his own followers *as one that ministereth* ; therefore he *pleased not himself*, but suited his demeanour to the state and circumstances of things, complied with the manners and fashions, comported with the humours and infirmities of men⁵.

Nature coveteth good success to its designs and undertakings, hardly brooking to be disappointed and defeated in them : therefore was he put to water dry sticks and to wash negroes ; that is, to instruct a most dull and stupid, to reform a most perverse and stubborn generation ; therefore his ardent desires, his solicitous

¹ John x. 32.

² John xiii. 18.

³ Matt. viii. 20 ; xvii. 25 ; xxi. 19 ; Luke viii. 3.

⁴ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

⁵ John iv. 6 ; Matt. iv. 23 ; ix. 35 ; Acts x. 38 ; Phil. ii. 7 ; Luke xxii. 27 ; Mark vi. 6.

cares, his painful endeavours, for the good of men, did obtain so little fruit, had indeed a contrary effect, rather aggravating their sins than removing them, rather hardening than turning their hearts, rather plunging them deeper into perdition than rescuing them from it; therefore so much in vain did he, in numberless miraculous works, display his power and goodness, convincing few, converting fewer by them; therefore, although he taught with most powerful authority, with most charming gracefulness, with most convincing evidence, yet, *Who* (could he say) *hath believed our report*⁶? Though he most earnestly did invite and allure men to him, offering the richest boons that heaven itself could dispense, yet *Ye will not* (was he forced to say) *come unto me, that ye may be saved*⁷: although, with assiduous fervency of affection he strove to reclaim them from courses tending to their ruin, yet how he prospered sad experience declareth, and we may learn from that doleful complaint: *How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not!* οὐκ ἐθέλησατε, your will did not concur, your will did not submit⁸.

In fine, natural will seeketh pleasure, and shunneth pain: but what pleasure did he taste? what inclination, what appetite, what sense, did he gratify? How did he feast, or revel? How but in tedious fastings, in frequent hungers, by passing whole nights in prayer and retirement for devotion upon the cold mountains? What sports had he, what recreation did he take, but feeling incessant gripes of compassion, and wearisome roving in quest of the lost sheep⁹? In what conversation could he divert himself, but among those whose doltish incapacity and forward humour did wring from his patience these words, *How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you*¹? What music did he hear? What but the rattlings of clamorous obloquy,

⁶ Luke iv. 22. 32; John xii. 38.⁷ John v. 40.⁸ Luke xiii. 34; xix. 42.⁹ Mark i. 13. 35; Luke v. 16; John iv. 6. 31; Luke vi. 12; Matt. xiv. 23; xviii. 12.¹ Matt. xvii. 17.

and furious accusations against him? To be desperately maligned, to be insolently mocked; to be styled a king, and treated as a slave; to be spit on, to be buffeted, to be scourged, to be drenched with gall, to be crowned with thorns, to be nailed to a cross; these were the delights which our Lord enjoyed, these the sweet comforts of his life, and the notable prosperities of his fortune: such a portion was allotted to him, the which he did accept from God's hand with all patient submission, with perfect contentedness, with exceeding alacrity, never repining at it, never complaining of it, never flinching from it, or fainting under it; but proceeding on in the performance of all his duty and prosecution of his great designs with undaunted courage, with unwearied industry, with undisturbed tranquillity and satisfaction of mind.

Had indeed his condition and fortune been otherwise framed; had he come into the world qualified with a noble extraction; had he lived in a splendid equipage; had he enjoyed a plentiful estate and a fair reputation; had he been favoured and caressed by men; had he found a current of prosperous success; had safety, ease, and pleasure waited on him; where had been the pious resignation of his will, where the precious merit of his obedience, where the glorious lustre of his example? How then had our frailty in him become victorious over all its enemies; how had he triumphed over the solicitations and allurements of the flesh, over the frowns and flatteries of the world, over the malice and fury of hell? How then could he have so demonstrated his immense charity toward us, or laid so mighty obligations upon us?

Such in general was the case, and such the deportment of our Lord; but there was somewhat peculiar, and beyond all this, occurring to him, which drew forth the words of our text: God had tempered for him a potion of all the most bitter and loathsome ingredients that could be; a drop whereof no man ever hath, or could endure to sip; for he was not only to undergo whatever load human rage could impose, of ignominious

disgrace and grievous pain ; but to feel dismal agonies of spirit, and those *unknown sufferings*², which God alone could inflict, God only could sustain : *Behold, and see*, he might well say, *if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me ; wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger*³. He was to labour with pangs of charity, and through his heart to be pierced with deepest commiseration of our wretched case : he was to crouch under the burden of all the sins (the numberless most heinous sins and abominations) ever committed by mankind : he was to pass through the hottest furnace of divine vengeance, and by his blood to quench the wrath of heaven flaming out against iniquity : he was to stand, as it were, before the mouth of hell, belching fire and brimstone on his face : his grief was to supply the defects of our remorse, and his suffering in those few moments to countervail the eternal torments due to us : he was to bear the hiding of God's face, and an eclipse of that favourable aspect, in which all bliss doth reside ; a case which he, that so perfectly understood, could not but infinitely resent : these things with the clearest apprehension he saw coming on him ; and no wonder that our nature started at so ghastly a sight, or that human instinct should dictate that petition, *Father, if thou wilt, let this cup pass from me* ; words implying his most real participation of our infirmity ; words denoting the height of those sad evils which encompassed him, with his lively and lowly resentment of them ; words informing us, how we should entertain God's chastisements, and whence we must seek relief of our pressures (that we should receive them, not with a scornful neglect or sullen insensibility, but with a meek contrition of soul ; that we should entirely depend on God's pleasure for support under them, or release from them) ; words which, in conjunction with those following, do show how instantly we should quash and overrule any insur-

² Δι' ἀγνώτων σου παθημάτων ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, Κύριε.—Lit. Gr.

³ Lam., i. 12.

rection of natural desire against the command or providence of God. We must not take that prayer to signify any purpose in our Lord to shift off his passion, or any wavering in resolution about it; for he could not anywise mean to undo that, which he knew done with God before the world's foundation; he would not unsettle that, which was by his own free undertaking and irreversible decree; he that so often with satisfaction did foretel this event, who with so *earnest desire*⁴ longed for its approach; who with that sharpness of indignation did rebuke his friend offering to divert him from it; who did again repress St. Peter's animosity with that serious expostulation, *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it*⁵? who had advisedly laid such trains for its accomplishment, would he decline it? Could that heart, all burning with zeal for God and charity to men, admit the least thought or motion of averseness from drinking that cup, which was the sovereign medicine administered by divine wisdom for the recovery of God's creation? No; had he spake with such intent, legions of angels had flown to his rescue⁶; that word which framed the worlds, which stilled the tempests, which ejected devils, would immediately have scattered his enemies, and dashed all their projects against him: wherefore those words did not proceed from intention, but as from instinct, and for instruction; importing that what our human frailty was apt to suggest, that his divine virtue was more ready to smother; neither did he vent the former, but that he might express the latter.

He did express it in real effect, immediately with all readiness addressing himself to receive that unsavoury potion; he reached out his hand for it, yielding fair opportunity and advantages to his persecutors; he lifted it up to his mouth, innocently provoking their envy and malice; he drank it off with a most steady calmness and sweet composure of mind, with the silence, the

⁴ Ἐπιθυμία ἐκτεθύμηση. — Luke xxii. 15.

⁵ John xviii. 11.

⁶ Matt. xxvi. 53.

simplicity, the meekness of a lamb carried to the slaughter; no fretful thought rising up, no angry word breaking forth, but a clear patience, enlivened with a warm charity, shining in all his behaviour, and through every circumstance of his passion.

Such in his life, such at his death, was the practice of our Lord; in conformity whereto we also readily should undertake whatever God proposeth, we gladly should accept whatever God offereth, we vigorously should perform whatever God enjoineth, we patiently should undergo whatever God imposeth or inflicteth, how cross soever any duty, any dispensation, may prove to our carnal sense or humour.

To do thus the contemplation of this example may strongly engage us: for, if our Lord had not his will, can we in reason expect, can we in modesty desire, to have ours? Must we be cockered and pleased in every thing, whenas he was treated so coarsely, and crossed in all things? Can we grutch at any kind of service or sufferance? Can we think much (for our trial, our exercise, our correction) to bear a little want, a little disgrace, a little pain, when the Son of God was put to discharge the hardest tasks, to endure the sorest adversities?

But further to enforce these duties, be pleased to cast a glance on two considerations: 1. What the will is to which; 2. Who the willer is to whom, we must submit.

1. What is the will of God? Is it any thing unjust, unworthy, or dishonourable, any thing incommodious or hurtful, any thing extremely difficult or intolerably grievous, that God requireth of us to do or bear? No: he willeth nothing from us or to us, which doth not best become us and most behove us, which is not attended with safety, with ease, with the solidest profit, the fairest reputation, and the sweetest pleasure.

Two things he willeth; that we should be good, and that we should be happy; the first in order to the second, for that virtue is the certain way, and a necessary qualification to felicity.

The will of God (saith St. Paul) *is our sanctification*⁷. What is that? What but that the decays of our frame, and the defacements of God's image within us, should be repaired; that the faculties of our soul should be restored to their original integrity and vigour; that from most wretched slaveries we should be translated into a happy freedom, yea, into a glorious kingdom; that from despicable beggary and baseness we should be advanced to substantial wealth and sublime dignity; that we should be cleansed from the foulest defilements, and decked with the goodliest ornaments; that we should be cured of most loathsome diseases, and settled in a firm health of soul; that we should be delivered from those brutish lusts, and those devilish passions, which create in us a hell of darkness, of confusion, of vexation, which dishonour our nature, deform our soul, ruffle our mind, and rack our conscience; that we should be endowed with those worthy dispositions and affections, which do constitute in our hearts a heaven of light, of order, of joy, and peace, dignify our nature, beautify our soul, clarify and cheer our mind; that we should eschew those practices, which never go without a retinue of woeful mischiefs and sorrows, embracing those which always yield abundant fruits of convenience and comfort; that, in short, we should become friends of God, fit to converse with angels, and capable of paradise.

God (saith St. Paul again) *willeth all men to be saved: he willeth not* (saith St. Peter) *that any man should perish*. He saith it himself, yea, he sweareth it, *that he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live*⁸. And what is this will? what but that we should obtain all the good whereof we are capable; that we should be filled with joy, and crowned with glory; that we should be fixed in an immovable state of happiness, in the perpetual enjoyment of God's favour, and in the light of his blissful presence; that we should be rid of all the evils to

⁷ 1 Thess. iv. 3.

⁸ 1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9; Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

which we are liable; that we should be released from inextricable chains of guilt, from incurable stings of remorse, from being irrecoverably engaged to pass a disconsolate eternity in utter darkness and extreme woe? Such is God's will; to such purposes every command, every dispensation of God (how grim, how rough soever it may seem) doth tend. And do we refuse to comply with that good-will; do we set against it a will of our own, affecting things unworthy of us, things unprofitable to us, things prejudicial to our best interests, things utterly baneful to our souls? Do we reject the will that would save us, and adhere to a will that would ruin us; a foolish and a senseless will, which, slighting the immense treasures of heaven, the unfading glories of God's kingdom, the ineffable joys of eternity, doth catch at specious nothings, doth pursue mischievous trifles; a shadow of base profit, a smoke of vain honour, a flash of sordid pleasure; which passeth away *like the mirth of fools, or the crackling of thorns*⁹, leaving only soot, black and bitter, behind it?

But at least, ere we do thus, let us consider whose will it is that requireth our compliance.

It is the will of Him, whose will did found the earth, and rear the heaven¹; whose will sustaineth all things in their existence and operation; whose will is the great law of the world, which universal nature in all its motions doth observe; which reigneth in heaven, the blessed spirits adoring it; which swayeth in hell itself, the cursed fiends trembling at it: and shall we alone (we pitiful worms crawling on earth) presume to murmur, or dare to kick against it?

It is the will of our Maker, who, together with all our other faculties, did create and confer on us the very power of willing: and shall we turn the work of his hands, the gift of his bounty, against him?

It is the will of our Preserver, who, together with all that we are or have, continually doth uphold our very will itself; so that without employing any positive

⁹ Eccles. vii. 6.

¹ Ps. cxlviii. 5; Apoc. iv. 11.

force, merely by letting us fall out of his hand, he can send us and it back to nothing : and shall our will clash with that, on which it so wholly dependeth ; without which it cannot subsist one moment, or move one step forward in action ?

It is the will of our sovereign Lord, who, upon various indisputable accounts, hath a just right to govern us, and an absolute power to dispose of us : ought we not therefore to say with old Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do to me as it seemeth good to him*² ? Is it not extreme iniquity, is it not monstrous arrogance for us, in derogation to his will, to pretend giving law, or picking a station to ourselves ? Do we not manifestly incur high treason against the King of heaven, by so invading his office, usurping his authority, snatching his sceptre into our hands, and setting our wills in his throne ?

It is the will of our Judge, from whose mouth our doom must proceed, awarding life or death, weal or woe unto us : and what sentence can we expect, what favour can we pretend to, if we presumptuously shall offend, oppose that will, which is the supreme rule of justice and sole fountain of mercy ?

It is the will of our Redeemer, who hath bought us with an inestimable price, and with infinite pains hath rescued us from miserable captivity under most barbarous enemies, that obeying his will we might command our own, and serving him we might enjoy perfect freedom : and shall we, declining his call and conduct out of that unhappy state, bereave him of his purchase, frustrate his undertakings, and forfeit to ourselves the benefit of so great redemption ?

It is the will of our best Friend ; who loveth us much better than we do love ourselves ; who is concerned for our welfare, as his own dearest interest, and greatly delighteth therein ; who by innumerable experiments hath demonstrated an excess of kindness to us ; who in all his dealings with us purely doth aim at

² 1 Sam. iii. 18.

our good, never charging any duty on us, or dispensing any event to us, so much with intent to exercise his power over us, as to express his goodness toward us; who never *doth afflict or grieve us*³ more against our will, than against his own desire; never indeed but when goodness itself calleth for it, and even mercy doth urge thereto; to whom we are much obliged, that he vouchsafeth to govern and guide us, our service being altogether unprofitable to him, his governance exceedingly beneficial to us: and doth not such a will deserve regard; may it not demand compliance from us? To neglect or infringe it, what is it? is it not palpable folly, is it not foul disingenuity, is it not detestable ingratitude?

So doth every relation of God recommend his will to us; and each of his attributes doth no less: for,

It is the will of Him who is most holy, or whose will is essential rectitude: how then can we thwart it, without being stained with the guilt, and wounded with a sense of great irregularity and iniquity?

It is the will of Him who is perfectly just; who therefore cannot but assert his own righteous will, and avenge the violation thereof: is it then advisable to drive him to that point by wilful provocation; or to run upon the edge of necessary severity?

It is the will of Him who is infinitely wise; who therefore doth infallibly know what is best for us, what doth most befit our capacities and circumstances; what in the final result will conduce to our greatest advantage and comfort: shall we then prefer the dreams of our vain mind before the oracles of his wisdom? shall we, forsaking the direction of his unerring will, follow the impulse of our giddy humour?

It is the will of Him who is immensely good and benign, whose will therefore can be no other than good-will to us; who can mean nothing thereby but to derive bounty and mercy on us: can we then fail of

³ Lam. iii. 33.

doing well, if we put ourselves entirely into his hands? are we not our own greatest enemies, in withstanding his gracious intentions?

It is, finally, the will of Him who is uncontrollably powerful; whose will therefore must prevail one way or other; either with our will or against it; either so as to bow and satisfy us, or so as to break and plague us: for, *My counsel* (saith he) *shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*⁴. As to his dispensations, we may fret, we may wail, we may bark at them: but we cannot alter or avoid them: sooner may we by our moans check the tides, or by our cries stop the sun in his career, than divert the current of affairs, or change the state of things established by God's high decree: what he layeth on, no hand can remove; what he hath destined, no power can reverse: our anger therefore will be ineffectual, our impatience will have no other fruit, than to aggravate our guilt and augment our grief.

As to his commands, we may *lift up ourselves against them*⁵, we may fight stoutly, we may in a sort prove conquerors; but it will be a miserable victory, the trophies whereof shall be erected in hell, and stand upon the ruins of our happiness; for, while we insult over abused grace, we must fall under incensed justice: if God cannot fairly procure his will of us in way of due obedience, he will surely execute his will upon us in way of righteous vengeance; if we do not surrender our wills to the overtures of his goodness, we must submit our backs to the strokes of his anger: he must reign over us, if not as over loyal subjects to our comfort, yet as over stubborn rebels to our confusion; for this in that case will be our doom, and the last words God will deign to spend upon us, *Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me*⁶.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the

⁴ Isa. xlv. 10.

⁵ Dan. v. 23.

⁶ Luke xix. 27.

dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen ¹.

¹ Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

SERMON XIII.

OF CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. iv. 11.

“ I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content¹.”

IN these words, by the example of an eminent saint, is recommended to us the practice of an excellent duty, or virtue; a practice in itself most worthy, very grateful to God, and immediately of great benefit to ourselves; being indeed necessary towards the comfortable enjoyment of our lives: it is contentedness, the virtue which, of all other, doth most render this world acceptable, and constituteth a kind of temporal heaven; which he that hath is thereby *ipso facto* in good measure happy, whatever other things he may seem to want²; which he that wanteth, doth, however otherwise he be furnished, become miserable, and carrieth a kind of hell within him: it cannot, therefore, but well deserve our best study about it, and care to get it; in imitation of St. Paul, who *had learned in whatever state he was, therein to be content*.

In discoursing upon which words, I shall consider two particulars: first, the virtue itself (contentedness in every state), the nature of which I shall endeavour

¹ Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον ἐν οἷς εἰμὶ ἀνάρκης εἶναι.

² Τὸ δ' ἀνάρκης τίθεμεν, ὃ μονούμενον αἰρετὸν ποιεῖ τὸν βίον, καὶ μηδενὸς ἐνδεῆ.—Arist. Eth. i. 7.

to explain ; then the way of attaining or producing it, implied by St. Paul in the words, *I have learned*.

For explication of the virtue: the word here expressing it is *αὐτάρκεια*, which signifieth self-sufficiency, or having enough of oneself³; the which is not to be understood absolutely, as if he took himself to be independent in nature, able to subsist of himself, not wanting any support or comfort without himself (for this is the property and privilege of the great *El-shaddai*, who alone subsisteth of himself, needing toward his being and felicity nothing without himself; this is repugnant to the nature of man, who is a creature essentially dependent for his being and subsistence, indigent of many things for his satisfaction and welfare), but relatively, considering his present state, the circumstances wherein he was, and the capacities he had; which by God's disposal and providence were such, that he could not want more than he had in his possession or reach. He meant not to exclude God, and his providence; but rather supposed that as the ground and cause of his self-sufficiency; according as elsewhere he expresseth it: *Not as if we were sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God*⁴: nor did he intend to exclude the need of other creatures, otherwise than as considered without his possession, or beyond his power; but he meaneth only, that he did not desire or lack more than what God had supplied him with; had put into his hand, or had set within his reach; that his will did suit to his state, his desire did not exceed his power.

This is the meaning of the word which the apostle useth: but for the more full and clear understanding the virtue itself, we shall first consider the object about which it is conversant; then the several acts which it requireth, or wherein the exercise thereof consisteth—

1. The object of contentedness is the present state

³ Τὸ εὐδαιμονοῦν ἀπέχειν δεῖ πάντα ἃ θέλει, πεπληρωμένῳ τινὶ ἰοκέναι· οὐ δίψος δεῖ προσεῖναι, οὐδὲ λιμόν.—Arr. iii. 24.

⁴ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

of things, whatever it be (whether prosperous or adverse, of eminency or meanness, of abundance or scantiness), wherein by Divine Providence we are set: τὰ ἐν οἷς ἐσμέν, *the things in which we are*; that is, our present condition, with all its circumstances; so it may be generally supposed, considering that it is ordinary, and almost natural for men (who have not learned as St. Paul had done, or are not instructed and exercised in the practice of this duty) to be dissatisfied and disquieted in every state; to be always in want of something; to find defects in every fortune; to fancy they may be in better case, and to desire it earnestly: if we estimate things wisely, rich men are more liable to discontent than poor men. It is observable, that prosperity is a peevish thing, and men of highest fortune are apt most easily to resent the smallest things: a little neglect, a slight word, an unpleasing look, doth affect them more than reproaches, blows, wrongs, do those of a mean condition.

Prosperity is a nice and squeamish thing; and it is hard to find any thing able to please men of a full and prosperous state, which, being incapable of bettering in substantial things, they can hardly find matter of solid delight. Whereas a poor estate is easily comforted by the accession of many things which it wanteth; a good meal, a small gift, a little gain, or good success of his labour, doth greatly please a poor man with a very solid pleasure: but a rich man hath nothing to please him, but a new toy, a puff of applause, success at a horse-race, at bowls, at hunting; in some petty sport and pastime, which can yield but a very thin and transitory satisfaction to any man not quite brutified and void of sense: whence contentedness hath place, and is needful in every condition, be it in appearance never so prosperous, so plentiful, so pleasant: *In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits*⁵.

The formal object thereof may indeed seem to be a condition distasteful to our sense, or cross to our fancy;

⁵ Job xx. 22; Chrys. tom. vii. p. 68.

an adverse or strait condition; a condition of poverty, of disgrace, of any great inconvenience or distress incident to us in this world; but since the most men are absolutely in such a condition, exposed to so many wants and troubles; since many more are needy comparatively, wanting the conveniences that others enjoy, and which themselves affect; since there are few, who in right estimation are not indigent and poor, that is, who do not desire and fancy themselves to want many things which they have not (for wealth consisteth not so much in the possession of goods, as in apprehension of freedom from want, and in satisfaction of desires), since care, trouble, disappointment, satiety, and discontent following them, do not only haunt cottages, and stick to the lowest sort of people, but do even frequent palaces, and pursue men of highest rank; therefore any state may be the object of contentedness; and the duty is of a very general concernment; princes themselves need to learn it; the lessons teaching it, and the arguments persuading it, may as well suit the rich and noble, as the poor and the peasant; so our apostle himself doth intimate in the words immediately following our text: *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need*⁷: he had the art, not only to manage well both conditions, but to be satisfied in either.

But seeing real adversity, poverty, and disgrace, have naturally the strongest influence in disturbing and disordering our minds; that contentedness is plainly most needful in such cases, as the proper support, or medicine of our mind in them; that other states do need it only as they, by fancy or infirmity, do symbolize or conspire with these; therefore unto persons in these states we shall more explicitly apply our directions and persuasions, as to the proper and primary subjects of contentedness; the which by analogy, or parity of

⁷ Phil. iv. 12.

reason, may be extended to all others, who by imaginary wants and distresses do create displeasure to themselves. So much for the object, or the subject, of the virtue.

2. The acts, wherein the practice thereof consisteth (which are necessary ingredients or constant symptoms of it), belong either to the mind and understanding, or to the will and appetite, or to external demeanour and practice; being, 1. right opinions and judgments of mind; 2. fit dispositions and affections of heart; 3. outward good actions and behaviours, in regard to our condition and the events befalling us; the former being as the root and stock, the latter as the fruits and the flowers of the duty: unto which may be reduced the correspondent negations, or absence of bad judgments, affections, and deportments in respect to the same objects.

(1.) As to our opinions and judgments of things, contentedness requireth, that,

1. We should believe our condition, whatever it be, to be determined by God; and that all events befalling us do proceed from him; at least that he permitteth and ordereth them, according to his judgment and pleasure; *Ξὺν τῷ Θεῷ πᾶς καὶ γελᾷ κ' ὠδύρεται*⁸, all, as the prophet singeth, *both good and evil, proceedeth out of the mouth of the Most High*, that *affliction* (as Job said) *cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground*⁹; as a thing arising spontaneously, or sowed by the hand of some creature; but rather descendeth from him, who saith, *I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things*¹⁰.

We are apt, when any thing falleth out unpleasant to us, to exclaim against fortune, and to accuse our stars; or to inveigh against the second causes which immediately offend us, ascribing all to their influence¹;

⁸ Soph. *Aj.* l. 383.

⁹ Lam. iii. 38; Amos iii. 6; 1 Kings xii. 15. 24.

¹⁰ Isa. xlv. 7.

¹ Atque Deos atque astra vocat crudelia mater.

which proceeding doth argue in us a heathenish ignorance and infidelity, or at least much inconsiderateness, and impotency of mind; that our judgment is blinded and clouded, or perverted and seduced by ill passions; for that in truth there is not in the world any occurrence merely fortuitous or fatal (all being guided and wielded by the powerful hand of the all-wise and almighty God), there is no creature which in its agency doth not depend upon God, as the instrument of his will, or subordinate thereto; wherefore upon every event we should, raising our minds above all other causes, discern and acknowledge God's hand; as David did, when Shimei cursed him: *Let him* (said the good king) *curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David*²; as Job did, when he was rifled of his goods: *The Lord* (said he) *gave, and the Lord hath taken away*³; as our Saviour did, when, in regard to the sore hardships he was designed to undergo, he said, *The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink*⁴?

2. Hence we should always judge every thing which happeneth to be thoroughly good and fit, worthy (all things considered) to be appointed, or permitted, by that Governor of things; not entertaining any harsh thoughts of God, as if he were not enough wise, just, or benign in ordering us to be afflicted or crossed; but taking all occurrences to be well consistent with all God's holy perfections and attributes⁵.

We are apt to conceit that the world is ill ordered, when we do not thrive and prosper therein; that every thing is irregular which squareth not to the models of our fancy; that things had gone much better if our designs had found success: but these are vain and perverse conceits; for that certainly is most good which

² 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

³ Job i. 21.

⁴ John xviii. 11.

⁵ Παραχωρήσωμεν τοίνυν παρακάτω τῷ σοφῷ τοῦ παντὸς κυβερνήτη, καὶ στέρξωμεν τὰ οἰκονομούμενα, ὅποια ποτ' ἂν ἦ καὶ θυμῇ, καὶ λυπηρὰ, &c.—Theod. Ep. 136.

seemeth good to God⁶; his will is a perfect standard of right and convenience, his eye never aimeth wrong, his hand never faileth to hit the mark of what is best: *All his paths are mercy and truth; he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*⁷; so did king Hezekiah rightly judge, when, upon denunciation of a sad doom to his country and posterity, he replied to the prophet, *Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken*⁸; so even the pagan sage discerned, when he thus rebuked a malcontent: *You slave, do you forsooth desire any thing, but what is best? and is not that only best, which seemeth best to God*⁹?

3. We should even be satisfied in our mind, that, according to God's purpose, all events do tend and conduce to our particular welfare; being not only good to us as members of the world, and in order to more general ends, but serving towards our private benefit and advantage. We may be ready perhaps to confess, that whatever happeneth may be indeed just and fit in some distant and occult respects; but hardly can we be induced to allow, that what we feel offensive to our sense and fancy is really good for us, or was meant for our benefit; we cannot easily discern any thing of love or favour in such matters: those sort of aphorisms, in holy Scripture, *Happy is the man whom God correcteth; as many as I love I rebuke and chasten*¹, sound strangely, and are huge paradoxes to us; such is our blindness of mind, and dulness of apprehension: but God knoweth with so exact a skilfulness to manage things, that every particular occurrence shall be advantageous to the person whom it toucheth; and accord-

⁶ Placeat homini quicquid Deo placuit.—Sen. *Ep.* 75.

Στέργειν γὰρ χρὴ τὰ παρὰ τῆς ἀρρήτου σοφίας πρὸς τὰ ἀνενόμητα, καὶ ταῦτα πάντως νομίζουσιν συμφέροντα.—Theod. *Ep.* 15.

Οἶδε γὰρ ὡς σοφὸς τὸ συμφέρον, καὶ ὡς ἀγαθὸς τοῦτο ἡμῖν πραγματεύεται.—Id. *Ep.* 18.

⁷ Ps. xxv. 10; cxlv. 17.

⁸ 2 Kings xx. 19.

⁹ Ἀνδράποδον, ἄλλο γὰρ θέλεις, ἢ τὸ ἄμεινον; ἄλλο οὖν εἰ ἄμεινον, ἢ τὸ θεῶ δοκοῦν;—Arr. xi. 7.

¹ Job v. 17; James i. 12; Rev. iii. 19; Prov. iii. 12.

ingly to **each** one he dispenseth that which is most suitable to him; whence, as frequently it is necessary for our good that we should be crossed (for that indeed otherwise we should often much harm, sometimes we should quite undo ourselves), so it always, when God so ordereth it, is to be deemed most profitable and wholesome for us: we are therefore in reason obliged to take the saddest accidents and sharpest afflictions, coming upon us by Providence, to be no other than fatherly corrections, or friendly rebukes, designed to render us good and happy; as arguments therefore and instances of especial good-will towards us; conceiving under every dispensation, that we do, as it were, hear God speaking to us, as he did to those in the prophet: *I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end*².

4. Hence we are to believe, that our present condition (whatever it be to the carnal or worldly sense) is in right judgment, all things considered, the best, most proper, most desirable for us; better than we, if it were at our discretion and choice, should put ourselves into: for that God (*the Saviour of all men, who desireth that no man should perish: who is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works*³; who exceedingly tendereth the welfare of his children and subjects) doth ever (here in this life, the time of merit and trial) with a most wise good-will design our best good; and by the most proper methods (such as do best suit our circumstances and capacities) doth aim to draw us into happiness; and accordingly doth assign a station for us most befitting in order to that great end: we therefore should think ourselves well placed, because we are where God doth set us; that we have enough, because we have what God allotteth us.

There are other more particular judgments, which contentedness involveth, or which are required toward it; such as these: that nothing originally is due to us, but all cometh purely from divine favour and bounty;

² Jer. xxix. 11.

³ 1 Tim. ii. 4; Ezek. xxxiii. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 9; Ps. cxlv. 9.

that all adversities are justly and deservedly inflicted on us, as the due wages, or natural fruits of our sins; that our happiness dependeth not on any present enjoyments or possessions, but may well subsist without them; that a competency (or so much as sufficeth to maintain our life without intolerable pain) ought to satisfy our desires: but these and the like judgments will come opportunely to be considered as motives to the practice of the duty.

(2.) From such acts of our mind, or intellectual part, concerning things incident to us, should proceed the following dispositions of will and affection:—

1. We should entertain all occurrences, how grievous soever to us, with entire submission, and resignation of our will to the will of God; wholly acquiescing in his good pleasure: saying in our hearts after our Lord, *Let not my will, but thine be done*; with good Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*; with David, *Behold here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good to him*; even with Socrates, *If so it pleaseth God, so let it be*⁴; with Epictetus⁵, *I always chiefly will that which cometh to pass; for I account that better which God willeth, than what I will myself; I will adhere as a minister and follower to him, I pursue, I affect, I simply will with him*⁶: looking upon them as sent from God, we should heartily bid them welcome, we should kindly embrace them, we should use them with all fair respect: ἀσπάζεσθαι τὰ συμβαίνοντα (to hug, or kindly to embrace things incident), φιλεῖν τὰ ἀπονεμόμενα, to love things dispensed by Providence⁷, are precepts, which, even as dictated by natural reason, philosophers do much inculcate.

This excludeth all rebellious insurrection, and swellings of mind against Providence; such as argue that we dislike God's government; that, were we able, we should

⁴ Εἰ ταύτη θεοῖς φίλον, ταύτη γενέσθω.

⁵ Ἀεὶ μᾶλλον θέλω τὸ γινόμενον κρεῖττον γὰρ ἡγοῦμαι, ὃ ὁ Θεὸς θέλει, ἢ ἐγὼ προσκείσθαι διάκονος καὶ ἀκόλουθος ἐκείνου, συνηρμῶ, ὀρέγομαι, ἀπλῶς συθέλω.—*Arg.* iii. 7.

⁶ Luke xxii. 42; 1 Sam. iii. 18; 2 Sam. xv. 26.

⁷ *M. Anton.* 3, 4. 2. 17. 10, 11, 12. 1.

struggle with God's will; that we gladly would shake off his yoke; all such ill resentment and repining at our lot, which maketh God's hand grievous, and his yoke uneasy to us; affections such as the Wise Man toucheth, when he saith, *The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord*⁸.

2. We should bear all things with steady calmness and composedness of mind, suppressing or quelling those tumults, those storms, those excesses of passion, which the sense of things disgustful is apt to excite; such are immoderate grief, fierce anger, irksome despair, and the like. No adversity should so ruffle our minds, as to defeat or pervert the use of our reason, so as to hinder us from perceiving or performing what becometh us, so as to engage us into any irregular or unseemly behaviour⁹.

3. We should indeed bear the worst events with an εὐθυμία, that is, with a sweet and cheerful disposition of mind, so as not to be put out of humour; not to be dejected or quite discouraged by them¹; not to fall into that heaviness, which, as the Wise Man saith, *maketh the heart of man to stoop*²; but rather finding delight and complacency in them, as considering whence they come, whither they aim and tend: such was the disposition and demeanour of the apostles and primitive good Christians in the midst of their most grievous adversities and sufferings³; *they rejoiced, &c.* they did *take joyfully the spoiling of their goods*, they did *account it all joy when they fell into divers tribulations*: they were, ὡς λυπούμενοι, ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες, *as grieved, but always rejoicing*⁴; their state was grievous, but their heart was constantly cheerful. Such a constant frame of mind we should maintain, so continually prepared

⁸ Prov. xix. 3.

⁹ "Let no man be moved by these afflictions;" μηδένα σαλίσσθαι (i. e. θορυβεῖσθαι.—Chrys.).—1 Thess. iii. 3.

¹ Ἡ κατὰ κόσμον λύπη θάνατον κατεργάζεται.—2 Cor. vii. 10.

² Prov. xii. 22.

³ Εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν στενοχωρίαις ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ.—2 Cor. xii. 10.

Εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν μετὰ χαρᾶς.—Col. i. 11.

⁴ Acts v. 41; Heb. x. 34; James i. 2; 2 Cor. vi. 10.

we should be against all contingencies, that nothing should happen amiss to us, so as deeply to affect us, or to unsettle us in our humour; that every thing from God's hand should be acceptable; that no sadness may seize on us, at least that we do not indulge or cherish it; that in nowise we suffer any regret to quench that spiritual comfort and joy in God, which *becometh the upright*, as the Psalmist saith; and which we are so often enjoined perpetually to maintain, as in all cases, so particularly under afflictions and trials⁵. We cannot indeed hardly be content, if we are not cheerful, for it is hard to be altogether on the suffering and bearing hand, without any pleasure: the mind can hardly stand in a poise, so as neither to sorrow nor joy; we cannot digest adversity, if we do not relish it; we shall not submit to it as his will, if we do not take it for an argument of his love: *εὐδοκῶ, I (saith St. Paul) have a liking or pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong*⁶.

4. We should with faith and hope rely and wait on God for the removal or easement of our afflictions; or, however, we should confide in him for grace, and strength to support them well: as our Saviour did, when he prayed, *Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup*; as they did in the prophet, who said, *In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, we have waited on thee*⁷; according to that rule in the Lamentations, *It is good that a man should both hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord*⁸; and those precepts in the Psalms, *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: wait upon the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart*⁹.

We should in any case be ready with the holy Psalmist thus to interrogate and sustain ourselves:

⁵ Ps. xxxiii. 1; xcvi. 12; Phil. iv. 4; iii. 1; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; 1 Pet. iv. 13.

⁶ 2 Cor. xii. 10.

⁷ Luke xxii. 42; Isa. xxvi. 8; xxxiii. 2.

⁸ Lam. iii. 26.

⁹ Ps. xxxvii. 7; xxvii. 14; xl. 1; xxxiii. 20; lxii. 1; xxv. 3; lxix. 6; xvi. 8.

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul ; why art thou so disquieted within me ? Hope thou in God ; for I shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance*¹.

Remembering and considering, that (as we are expressly taught in Scripture, and as all our religion doth clearly suppose) *God knoweth to rescue the godly out of tribulation*² (he knoweth the proper season when it is fit to do it); that *he is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it*³; reflecting, I say, on these certain points of Christian truth, we should never *sorrow as those who are without hope*⁴; we should never despair of a good riddance from our adversity, when it shall be seasonable or beneficial for us; we should always be assured of a comfortable support under it, which is usually better than deliverance from it⁵; our minds should never sink into despondency or disconsolateness: that this is practicable in the worst case, we have conspicuous instances to assure us; it hath been the practice of most illustrious and excellent persons, particularly of the holy apostles; never was any condition, in outward respects and appearance, more forlorn and dismal than was theirs; yet it nowise bereaved them of hope or courage: *We* (they could say) *are troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; we are perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed*⁶.

5. We should indeed not so much as faint or languish in our minds upon any such occasion; no adversity should impair the forces of our reason or our spirit; should enervate our courage, or slacken our industry; should render us sick, or weak in heart; for, *If* (saith the Wise Man) *thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small* (it is the sign of an infirm mind), and, *μὴ ἐκκακῆν, not to falter or decay, μὴ ἐκλύεσθαι, not to be dissolved, or disjointed, in our souls* (as the body is in

¹ Ps. xlii. 5.² 2 Pet. ii. 3; 1 Pet. v. 7; Matt. vi. 25.³ 1 Cor. x. 13.⁴ 1 Thess. iv. 13.⁵ Isa. xl. 31; Mic. vii. 7.⁶ 2 Cor. iv. 8; 1 Cor. iv. 11.

scorbutic distempers), are rules prescribed to us in such cases⁷: we do then indeed need a firm and robust constitution of soul⁸, we should then bear up most resolutely and stoutly: the encouragement of Moses to the people, entering upon battle, may well be accommodated to us, in regard to our conflict with adversities: *Let not your hearts faint, fear not and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them*⁹.

6. We should not be weary of our condition, or have irksome longings for alteration; but, with a quiet indifferency and willingness of mind, lie under it during God's pleasure; according to the Wise Man's advice, *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction*¹; and that of the apostle, enforced by our Lord's example, *Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds*². We should not think God slow, or his time long and tedious, as if he were forgetful of us, or backward to succour us; as the Psalmist was inclined to do, when in the day of trouble he brake forth into these conceits and expressions: *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever, doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies*³? Thus he in a sad mood was apt to think and speak; but, recollecting himself, he perceived it was his error, and confessed it was his fault thus to imagine; *I said, it was mine infirmity*; and it will be ours likewise, if we entertain such conceptions and resentments: we should with the same mind endure our present state, as we do pass through a hard winter, or a time of foul weather, taking it for seasonable and fit, because the wise Author of nature hath so appointed and ordered it.

⁷ Prov. xxiv. 10; 2 Cor. iv. 16; Rev. ii. 3; 2 Thess. iii. 13; Gal. vi. 9; Heb. xii. 3.

⁸ — nunc animis opus est, nunc pectore firmo.

⁹ Deut. xx. 3.

² Heb. xii. 3.

¹ Prov. iii. 11.

³ Ps. lxxvii. 7. 10.

7. We should by adverse accidents be rendered lowly in our own eyes, and sober in our conceits of ourselves; meek and gentle, tender and pliable in our temper and frame of spirit; sensible of our unworthiness and meanness, of our natural frailty, penury, and misery, of our actual offences and miscarriages; deeply affected in regard to the awful majesty and power, to the perfect holiness and strict justice of God; they should quell our haughty stomach, they should supple our stiff wilfulness, they should soften our hard hearts, they should mitigate our peevish humours: to effect these things, is usually the design of such accidents, and it is ever the best fruit of them: this is that which St. Peter adviseth to, when he saith, *Be humbled under the mighty hand of God*⁴; which God approveth, and encourageth with a gracious promise, when he saith, *To this man will I look, even to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word*⁵: this disposition is an inseparable adherent to contentedness; he that hath not his spirit thus broken, or mollified, will hardly be content in any state; he that is haughty in conceit, and sturdy in humour, will every where find that which will cross and disturb him.

8. It is required that we should, notwithstanding any meanness, any hardness of our condition, be meekly and kindly affected toward others, being satisfied and pleased with their more prosperous state⁶. We should not be angry with the world, because we do not thrive or flourish in it; we should not be sullen or peevish toward any man, because his fortune is better than ours; we should not repine or grudge at the good success of any of our brethren, because we want the like ourselves; *we should rather rejoice with those that rejoice*⁷; innocently filching some pleasure from them, or borrowing some satisfaction from their enjoyments. It is *human*

⁴ 1 Pet. v. 6.

⁵ Isa. lxvi. 2.

⁶ Ita plerumque contingit, ut dum aliquos fratres nostros in quantulacunque requie constitutos in mediis nostris anxietatibus cogitamus, non parva ex parte recreemur, tanquam et nos ideo ipsi quietius tranquilliusque vivamus.—Aug. Ep. 144.

⁷ Rom. xii. 15.

thus to do, because of the natural cognation and friendship of men; it is more especially *Christian*, because of our spiritual consanguinity; by virtue whereof we are so knit together, and made *members each to other*, that, *if* (as St. Paul telleth us) *one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and if one member be honoured, all the members should rejoice with it*^a: we can hardly be content without thus appropriating the goods, and sharing in the delights of others; he can never be content, who looketh *with an evil eye* upon other men's prosperity; he cannot do well himself, who loveth not to see his neighbour do well; numberless occasions will happen to discompose and vex him.

Adversity impatiently borne is apt to sour our spirits, and render us froward toward men; especially when it proceedeth from the unkindness, ingratitude, or treachery of friends, or of persons obliged to us for our good-will, or for benefits done to them: but nothing should render us unkindly disposed toward the world, nothing should extinguish charity in us toward any man: so plain reason teacheth us, so great examples enforce; Moses did not lose his affection towards his countrymen, because he was by one of them threatened away into banishment and vagrancy; the apostles became not disaffected to the world, because it misused and persecuted them; our Lord did continue most earnestly to desire, and laboriously to endeavour the good of those who most spitefully used him: like theirs, in all cases, should our disposition be; we should ever observe the Psalmist's advice, *Cease from anger, forsake wrath, fret not thyself in anywise to do evil*^b.

9. Again: Contentedness doth imply a freedom from all solicitude and anxiety of mind, in reference to provision for our needs, and conveniences of life; according to those rules and precepts of *casting our burden and care upon the Lord, of being careful for nothing, but commending our affairs to God's ordering*^c; according to that most comfortable precept of our Lord, *Take no*

^a Rom. xii. 15; 1 Cor. xii. 26.

^b Ps. xxxvii. 8.

^c 1 Pet. v. 7; Ps. xxxvii. 5; lv. 23; Phil. iv. 6.

care, saying, *What shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, how shall we be clothed? for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye want all these things*². If we do not thus, it is hardly possible that we should be content; if we do not depend upon Providence, we cannot escape being often distracted with care, and perplexed with fear; we cannot cheerfully hope for any thing we need, nor be quietly secure of any thing we possess.

10. It requireth also that we should curb our desires, and confine them in the narrowest bounds we can; so as not to affect more in quantity, or better in quality, than our nature and state do require³: if we must have superfluities, if we can only relish dainties, we shall never be pleased; for as nature hath limits, and is content with little; as there is no state in this world, the exigencies whereof may not be answered with a competence; so curiosity is an infinite and insatiable thing: *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man; he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich*⁴; that is, he which is curious and nice in his desires will never have enough⁵: the rule, which, according to St. Paul, should regulate our desires, is this: *Having food and raiment, let us with them be satisfied*⁶: if this will satisfy us, we may easily obtain satisfaction⁷: a moderate industry, with God's blessing, will procure so much; God hath promised to bestow it: if this will not suffice, there is no sure way of getting or keeping more; as God is no-wise obliged to provide us superfluities, or concerned to relieve our extravagant longings, so we may fear that Providence will be ready to cross us in our cares and endeavours tending to those purposes; so that we shall be disappointed in the procurement, or disturbed in the fruition of such needless things. However, he

² Matt. vi. 31.

³ Ἡδίστα πολυτελείας ἀπολαύουσιν οἱ ἡκίστα ταύτης δεόμενοι.—Epic. ad Menæc.

Ventre nihil novi frugalius.—Juv. Sat. v. 6.

⁴ Prov. xxi. 17.

⁵ Αἱ κατὰ φύσιν ὀρέξεις ἀνταρκτικῶς περιορίζεται.—Cl. Alex. Pæd. ii.

⁶ 1 Tim. vi. 8.

⁷ Si ad naturam vives, nunquam eris pauper; si ad opinionem, nunquam dives.—Epic. Sen. Ep. 16.

that is most scant in his desires, is likely to be most content in his mind: *He* (as Socrates said) *is nearest the gods* (who need nothing) *that needeth fewest things*^a.

In fine, contentedness doth import, that, whatever our condition is, our minds and affections should be modelled and squared just according to it; so that our inclinations be compliant, our desires be congruous thereto; so that easily we can comport with the inconveniences, can relish the comforts, can improve the advantages sticking thereto; otherwise, like an ill-made garment, it will sit unhandsome upon us, and be troublesome to us. It is not usually our condition itself, but the unsuitableness thereof to our disposition and desires (which soureth all its sweets, and rendereth its advantages fruitless), that createth discontent; for, although it be very mean, others bear the same cheerfully; many would be glad thereof: if therefore we will be content, we must bend our inclinations, and adapt our desires, to a correspondence with our state.

If we are rich, we should get a large and bountiful heart; otherwise our wealth will hang loose about us: the care and trouble in keeping it, the suspicion and fear of losing it, the desire of amplifying it, the unwillingness to spend or use it, will bereave us of all true satisfaction therein, and render it no less unsavoury to us, than unprofitable to others.

If we are poor, we should have a frugal, provident, industrious mind, sparing in desires, free from curiosity, willing to take pains, able to digest hardships; otherwise the straitness of our condition will pinch and gall us.

Are we high in dignity or reputation? we then need a mind well ballasted with sober thoughts; otherwise the wind of vanity will drive us into absurd behaviours, thence will dash us upon disappointments, and consequently will plunge us into vexation and discontent.

Are we mean and low? we need a meek and lowly, a calm and steady spirit; not affecting little respects, or resenting the want of them; apt to pass over or to

^a 'Ο ἐλαχίστων δεόμενος ἑγγίστα θεῶν.—Socr. in Xenoph. *Apomn.*
iii.

bear quietly petty affronts and neglects; not apt to be moved by words signifying contempt or disdain; else (being fretted with such things, which in this ill-natured and hard-hearted world we may be sure often to meet with) we shall be uneasy in our minds, and impatiently wish a change of our state.

These and the like dispositions and affections of soul this duty containeth or requireth: from hence should arise a correspondent external demeanour, and such actions as these which follow:—

1. We should restrain our tongues from all unseemly and unsavoury expressions, implying dissatisfaction in God's proceedings, or displeasure at his providence; arguing desperation or distrust in God; such as were those of the discontented and impatient Israelites: *They* (saith the Psalmist) *spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people?*⁹ Such as they used, of whom the prophet saith, *When they shall be hungry, they will fret themselves, and curse their King and their God*¹; as those in the Apocalypse, who, being afflicted with deserved judgments, *did blaspheme the name of God, which had power over those plagues—blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores*². Into such profane enormities of language is discontent apt to break forth, questioning the power of God, or his willingness to succour us; venting wrath and displeasure toward him; charging him foolishly with injustice, or with unkindness, or with negligence, or with impotency; the abstaining from which behaviour, under the sense of his bitter calamities, is a great commendation of Job: *In all this* (it is said) *Job sinned not, neither charged God foolishly*³.

2. We should indeed forbear any the least complaint

⁹ Ps. lxxviii. 19; Num. xxi. 5.

¹ Isa. iii. 21.

² Rev. xvi. 9. 11. 21.

³ Job i. 22.—Οὐκ ἔδωκέν ἀφροσύνην τῷ Θεῷ.

Ἄλλ' ἔχε σιγῇ μῦθον, ἐπίτρεψον δὲ θεοῖσι.—Hom. Od. T.

or murmuring, in regard to the dispensations of Providence; or upon dissatisfaction in the state allotted us: St. Jude saith, that God in the last day *will come to execute judgment, and to convince men of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him: these* (subjoineth he) *are γογγυσταὶ μεμψίμοιροι, murmurers, that complain of the lot*⁴; which signifieth the heinousness and extreme dangerousness of this practice. *Wherefore doth the living man complain*⁵? is the prophet's question, implying it to be an unreasonable and blameable practice. Wherefore the advice of David is good: to suppress all complaint, to be still and silent in such cases: *Be still* (saith he), *and know that I am God*; and, *Be silent to the Lord*⁶; the which precepts his practice may seem well to interpret and back: *I was* (saith he) *dumb; I opened not my mouth, because it was thy doing*⁷⁸; and accordingly Job, *Behold* (said he, after having considered all the reasons he could imagine of God's proceedings), *I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth*⁹. And thus our Saviour, when *he was oppressed and afflicted, opened not his mouth*¹⁰.

3. Yea, it is our duty, in these cases, to spend our breath in declaring our satisfaction in God's dealing with us¹; acknowledging his wisdom, justice, and goodness therein; blessing and praising him for all that hath befallen us; each of us confessing after David, *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me*²; imitating Job, who, upon the loss of all his goods, did say no more than this; *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord*³.

4. We should abstain from all irregular, unlawful,

⁴ Jude 15, 16.

⁵ Lam. iii. 39.

⁶ Ps. xlv. 10; iv. 4; xxxvii. 7.

⁷ *σιωπῇ*

Πάσχειν ἄλγεα πολλὰ βίας ὑποδεγμένος ἀνδρῶν.—Od. E.

⁸ Ps. xxxix. 9.

⁹ Job xl. 4.

¹⁰ Isa. liii. 7.

¹ *Δόξα τῷ Θεῷ πάντων ἕνεκεν. Οὐ γὰρ παύσομαι τοῦτο ἐπιλέγων αἰεὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσι μοι τοῖς συμβαίνουσι.—Chrys. ad Olymp. Ep. 11.*

² Ps. cxix. 75.

³ Job i. 21.

and unworthy courses toward the removal or remedy of our needs or crosses, choosing rather to abide quietly under their pressure, than by any unwarrantable means to relieve or relax ourselves; rather bearing patiently than violently, like those in the prophet, *breaking our yoke and bursting our bands. Take heed, regard not iniquity; for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction*⁴. We should rather continue poor, than by cozenage or rapine endeavour to raise our fortune; we should rather lie under disgrace and contempt, than by sinful or sordid compliances strive to acquire the respect and favour of men; we should rather willingly rest in the lowest condition, than do as those who, by disturbing the world, by fomenting disorders and factions, by supplanting their neighbour's welfare, by venting slanders and detractions, do labour to amplify their estate; we should rather endure any inconvenience or distress, than have recourse to ways of evading them disallowed by God, doing as the Jews did, who in their straits, against the declared pleasure of God, *set their faces toward Egypt, strengthened themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, trusted in the staff of that broken reed*⁵. In neglect or diffidence toward God, to embrace such aids is, as God in the prophet declareth, a very blameable and mischievous folly: *Ephraim (saith he) is like a silly dove without heart; they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria—Woe unto them, for they have fled from me; destruction unto them, because they have transgressed against me*⁶. We may consider how St. Paul reproveth the Corinthians for seeking a redress of wrong, scandalous and dishonourable to the church: *Now, therefore, it is utterly a fault among you, that ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?* Even to right ourselves in a way whereby any dishonour may come to God, or damage to his church, is not to be

⁴ Jer. v. 5; Job xxxvi. 21.

⁵ Jer. xlii. 15; ii. 18. 13; Isa. xxx. 2; xxxvi. 6; xxxi. 1; Ezek. xvii. 15.

⁶ Hos. vii. 11. 13.

⁷ 1 Cor. vi. 7.

approved; and better it is, in the apostle's judgment, to bear any injury or damage ourselves: *Better it is, saith St. Peter, if the will of God be so, that we suffer for well doing, than to do ill.* And, *Let them who suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator*⁸, is another wholesome advice of that great apostle.

5. We should, notwithstanding any adversity, proceed in our affairs (such as God requireth, or reason putteth us upon) with alacrity, courage, and industry; performing, however, so far as our circumstances do permit, what is good and fit for us: no disappointment or cross, no straits or grievances of condition, should render us listless or lazy, but rather it should quicken and inflame our activity; this being a good way to divert us from the sense of our misfortunes, and to comfort us under their pressure, as also the readiest way to remove or to abate them, τὸ παρὸν εὖ θέσθαι, *to order the present well*, whatever it be⁹; to make the best of a bad matter, to march forward whither reason calls, how difficultly soever, or slowly it be, in a rough or dirty way; not to yield to difficulties, but resolutely to encounter them, to struggle lustily with them, to endeavour with all our might to surmount them¹; are acts worthy of a manly reason and courage: to direct ill accidents to good ends, and improve them to honest uses, is the work of a noble virtue. If a bad game be dealt us, we should not presently throw up, but play it out so well as we can; so perhaps we may save somewhat, we shall at least be busy till a better come. *Put thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good*², is the Psalmist's advice in such a case; and it is a practice necessary to the procuring and maintaining content: if we be not otherwise well employed, we shall be apt, in our thoughts, to melancholize, and dote upon our mis-

⁸ 1 Pet. iii. 17; iv. 19.

⁹ Κερδαντέον τὸ παρὸν σὺν εὐλογιστίᾳ.—Ant. iv. 26; vi. 2.

Τὸ παρὸν ἀπενθύνειν πρὸς ὁσιότητα καὶ δικαιοσύνην.—Id. xii. 1.

¹ Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.

² Ps. xxxvii. 3.

chances ; the sense of them will fasten upon our spirits, and gnaw our hearts.

6. We should behave ourselves fairly and kindly toward the instruments and abettors of our adversity ; toward those who brought us into it, and those who detain us under it, by keeping off relief, and those who forbear to afford the succour we might expect ; forbearing to express any wrath or displeasure, to exercise any revenge or enmity toward them ; but rather, even upon that score, bearing good-will, and expressing kindness toward them ; not only as to our brethren, whom, according to the general law of charity, we are bound to love, but as to the servants of God in this particular case, and the instruments of his pleasure toward us ; considering that, by maligning or molesting them, we do express ill resentments of God's dealing with us, and, in effect, through their sides do wound his Providence : thus did the good king behave himself toward Shimei, when he was bitterly reproached and cursed by him ; not suffering (upon this account, because he was God's instrument of afflicting himself) that any harm should be done unto him : thus the holy apostles, *being reviled, did bless ; being defamed, did entreat* : thus our Lord demeaned himself toward his spiteful adversaries ; who, *when he was reviled, did not revile again ; when he suffered, he did not threaten ; but committed it to him that judgeth righteously* ³. In all these cases we should at least observe the rules and advices of the Wise Man : *Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me, I will render to the man according to his work ; say thou not, I will recompense evil ; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee* ⁴.

Discontent usually consisteth not so much in displeasure for the things we suffer, as at the persons who bring them on us, or who do not help to rid us from them ; it is their presumed injury or discourtesy which we do fret at : such passions, therefore, toward men being discarded, our evils presently will become sup-

³ 2 Sam. xvi. 7 ; 1 Cor. i. 12, 13 ; 1 Pet. ii. 23 ; iii. 9.

⁴ Prov. xxiv. 29 ; xx. 22.

portable, and content easily will ensue. As men in any sickness or pain, if their friends are about them, affording comfort or assistance, do not seem to feel any thing, and forbear complaining; so, if the world about us doth please us, if we bear no disaffection or grudge toward any person in view, our adversity will appear less grievous; it will indeed commonly be scarce sensible to us.

In these and such like acts the duty and virtue of contentedness doth especially reside; or it is employed and exercised by them: and so much may suffice for the explication of its nature. I come now to consider the way of attaining it, intimated by St. Paul here, when he saith, *I have learned.*

SERMON XIV.

OF CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. iv. 11.

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

THESE words signify how contentedness may be attained, or how it is produced: it is not an endowment innate to us; it doth not arrive by chance into us; it is not to be purchased by any price; it springeth not up of itself, nor ariseth from the quality of any state; but it is a product of discipline; *I have learned*.

It is a question debated in Plato, εἰ διδασκὸν ἡ ἀρετὴ, *whether virtue be to be learned*; St. Paul plainly resolveth it in this case by his own experience and testimony. What Seneca saith in general of virtue (*Nature giveth not virtue; it is an art to become good*¹) is most true of this virtue; it is an art, with which we are not born, no more than with any other art or science; the which, as other arts, cannot be acquired without studious application of mind, and industrious exercise: no art indeed requireth more hard study and pain toward the acquiry of it, there being so many difficulties, so many obstacles in the way thereto: we have no great capacity, no towardly disposition to learn it; we must, in doing it, deny our carnal sense, we

¹ Non dat natura virtutem, ars est bonum fieri.—Sen. *Ep.* 89.

Virtus etiamsi quosdam impetus ex natura sumit, tamen perficienda doctrina est.—Quintil. xii. 2.

must settle our wild fancy, and suppress fond conceits; we must bend our stiff and stubborn inclinations; we must repress and restrain wanton desires; we must allay and still tumultuous passions; we must cross our humour and curb our temper: which to do is a hard chapter to learn; much consideration, much practice, much contention and diligence, are required thereto.

Hence it is an art which we may observe few do much study; and of the students therein few are great proficient; so that, *Quid fit, Mecænas?* Horace's question, *How comes it to pass, that nobody liveth content with the lot assigned by God?* wanted not sufficient ground.

However, it is not, like the quadrature of the circle, or the philosopher's stone, an art impossible to be learned, and which will baffle all study: there are examples, which show it to be obtainable; there are rules and precepts, by observing which we may arrive to it.

And it is certainly a most excellent piece of learning; most deserving our earnest study: no other science will yield so great satisfaction, or good use; all other sciences, in comparison thereto, are dry and fruitless curiosities: for were we masters of all other knowledge, yet wanted the skill of being content, we should not be wise or happy; happiness and discontent are ἀσύσῳτα (things incompatible).

But how then may this skill be learned? I answer, chiefly (divine grace concurring) by these three ways: 1. By understanding the rules and precepts, wherein the practice thereof consisteth. 2. By diligent exercise, or application of those rules to practice; whereby the habit will be produced. 3. By seriously considering, and impressing upon our minds, those rational inducements (suggested by the nature and reason of things) which are apt to persuade the practice thereof. The *first* way I have already endeavoured to declare; the *second* wholly dependeth upon the will and endeavour of the learner; the *third* I shall now insist upon, propounding some rational considerations, apt, by God's

help, to persuade contentedness, and serving to cure the malady of discontent. They may be drawn from several heads: from God, from ourselves, from our particular condition or state; from the world, or general state of men here; from the particular state of other men in comparison to ours; from the nature and consequences of the duty itself; every thing about us, well examined and pondered, will minister somewhat inducing and assisting thereto.

I. In regard to God we may consider, that equity doth exact, and gratitude requireth, and all reason dictateth, that we should be content²: or that, in being discontented, we behave ourselves very unbecomingly and unworthily; are very unjust, very ingrateful, and very foolish toward him.

1. Equity doth exact this duty of us, and in performing it we act justly toward God, both admitting his due right, and acknowledging his good exercise thereof; that saying in the Gospel, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own*³? is a most evident maxim of equity: it is, therefore, the natural right and prerogative of God, as the Creator and Preserver, and consequently the absolute Lord, Owner, and Governor of all things, to assign his station, and allot his portion to every person, as he judgeth good and convenient; it is most just that inviolably he should enjoy this right: he being also infinitely wise and good, it is likewise most just to acknowledge that he doth perfectly well manage this right. Now by contentful submission to God's disposal of things we do worthily express our due regard to both these, avowing his right, and approving his exercise thereof; but by discontent and regret at what happeneth we do, in effect, injure God in both those respects, disavowing his right, and impeaching his management. We do thereby so renounce his right, as (so far as conceit and wish do reach) to invade it, and usurp it to ourselves; signifying, that in our opinion things ought not

² 1 Sam. iii. 18.

³ Matt. xx. 15.

to be ordered according to his judgment and pleasure, but after our fancy and humour; we claim to ourselves the privilege of controlling his estate, and dispensing his goods, so as to be our own carvers, and to assume to ourselves so much as we think good; we imply, that, if we were able, we would extort the power out of his hands, and manage it ourselves, modelling the world according to our conceits and desires.

We do also (since we cannot but perceive the other attempt of dispossessing God to be frivolous and fruitless) in effect charge God with misdemeanour, with iniquity or infirmity in his distribution and disposal of things⁴; intimating, that in our opinion he doth not order them so justly or so wisely as might be (not so well as we in our wisdom and justice should order them); for did we conceive them managed for the best, we could not but judge it most unreasonable to be aggrieved, or to complain: so heinously insolent and unjust are we in being discontent. In earnest, which is most equal, that God should have his will, or we? For shame we shall say, God: why then do we not contentedly let him have it?

It is indeed, if we consider it, the highest piece of injustice that we can be guilty of, exceeding that which we commit in any other sort of disobedience. For as in any state, seditious mutinying is the greatest crime, as most directly violating the majesty, and subverting the authority of the prince; so in the world, none may be supposed more to offend and wrong its sovereign Governor, than such malecontents, who dislike and blame his proceedings: even a heathen could teach us, that it is our duty to *subject our mind to him that administereth all things, as good citizens to the law of the commonwealth*⁵; if we do not, we are rebellious and seditious; which is the highest pitch of injustice toward our most gracious Sovereign.

⁴ Multos inveni æquos adversus homines, adversus Deos neminem.—Sen. *Ep.* 93.

⁵ Τὴν αὐτοῦ γνώμην ὑποτάσσειν τῷ διοικοῦντι τὰ ὅλα, καθάπερ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ πολῖται τῷ νόμῳ τῆς πόλεως.—*Arr.* i. 12.

Again, there can be no greater injury or affront offered to God, than to *give him the lie*⁶, by questioning his veracity or fidelity. This discontent plainly doth involve: for God hath expressly declared himself ready upon all occasions to do us good; he hath promised to *care for us, and never to forsake us*⁷, or leave us destitute; which word of his if we did not distrust, and take him to be unfaithful, we could not be discontent: as no man is displeased with his condition, or suspicious of want, who knoweth that he hath abundant supply of all he can need in a sure place; that he hath a person most able, most willing, most faithful, engaged to succour him: so, did we believe God to be true, who hath promised to help us, we could not be discontented for fear of any want.

We must at least, in so doing, suspect God to be deficient in goodness toward us, or unwilling to help us; or we must apprehend him impotent, and unable to perform what he would, and what he hath promised for us (like those infidels, who said, *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people*⁸?) which conceits of God are also very unworthy, and injurious to him.

2. Gratitude requireth of us this duty: for we having no right or title to any thing; all that we have coming from God's pure bounty; he having upon us all (whatever our condition comparatively is, or may seem to us) freely conferred many great benefits, common to all men among us (our being, life, reason, capacity of eternal happiness, manifold spiritual blessings, incomparably precious and excellent), we in all reason should be thankful for these, without craving more, or complaining for the want of other things⁹. Whereas also all events, how cross soever to our sensual conceits or appetites, are by God designed and dispensed for our

⁶ 1 John v. 10.

⁷ Matt. vi. 25. 36; Heb. xiii. 5.

⁸ Ps. lxxviii. 19.

⁹ Iniquus est qui muneris sui arbitrium danti non relinquit, avidus qui non lucris loco habet quod accepit, sed damni quod redidit, &c.—Sen. *ad Polyb.* 29.

good, gratitude requireth that we should thank God for them, and not murmur against them.

Surely if, instead of rendering God thanks for all the excellent gifts which he most liberally (without any previous obligation to us, or desert of ours) hath bestowed on us, and continueth to bestow, we fret, and quarrel, that he doth not in smaller matters seem to cocker us, we are extremely ingrateful and disingenuous toward him. If any great person here should freely bestow on us gifts of huge value (high preferment, or much wealth), but with good reason, as we might presume, should withhold from us some trifle that we fancy or dote on, should we not be very unworthy, if we should take it ill and be angry with him for that cause? The case is plainly the same: God hath in the frankest manner bestowed on us innumerable and inestimable goods, in comparison whereto any comfort or convenience of our state here is very trivial and despicable: are we not, therefore, very ingrateful, if we heinously resent the want of any such things? if upon any such account we disgust his Providence? Do we not deal, beyond all expression, unworthily with God, in so much undervaluing the goods which he hath given us, or doth offer us, and hath put in our reach? He hath made us capable of the greatest goods imaginable, and faithfully upon easy terms proffereth them to us; he even tendereth himself (himself, the immense and all-comprehending good, the fountain of all joy and bliss) to be fully enjoyed by us: his wisdom he offereth, to instruct and guide us; his power, to protect and guard us; his fulness, to supply us; his goodness, to comfort us: he offereth his love and favour to us, in having which we virtually and in effect have all things; becoming thereby, in the highest degree, rich and honourable and happy: and is it not then outrageous unworthiness to prize any other thing (any petty accommodation of this transitory life, any pitiful toy here) so much, as to be displeased for the want thereof; as if all this were not enough to satisfy our needs, or satiate our desires; as if, notwithstanding all these

immense effusions (yea, as it were profusions) of bounty upon us, we could be indigent or unhappy? *Shall we* (to use that holy and most ingenuous consideration of Job) *receive so much good from the bountiful hand of God, and shall we not contentedly receive or bear so small evils from him*¹? Evils, indeed, in name and to gross sense, but not so in reality, not so in effect, at least not so in God's design²; but rather things very convenient and profitable for us: which is another aggravation of our ingratitude; for

Are we not also very ingrateful in misapprehending and disliking that, which God doeth out of very gracious intentions toward us; in loathing his fatherly and friendly dispensations; the fatherly chastisements and friendly disciplines which he unwillingly is forced (is, I say, forced by his own great love, and by our pressing needs) to inflict or impose upon us³? Surely our ill opinion of, or *despising*⁴, as the Wise Man calleth it, these unpleasant blessings, is no small fault; neither will our not discerning (out of affected dulness and stupid pravity not discerning) the wisdom of God's methods, and the wholesomeness of the means he useth to better us, excuse us from foul ingratitude.

3. Again, upon many accounts, reason further dicateth in respect to God, that we should be content: because it is most reasonable to acquiesce in God's choice of our state, he being infinitely more wise than we, and infinitely better understanding what is good for us than we can do; because he is well affected to us, and more truly loveth us than we do ourselves⁵; because he hath a just right, and irresistible power to

¹ Job ii. 10.

² Εὐχαριστῶ σοι, πάτερ, ὃ ποιητὰ τῶν σῶν ἀνθρώπων—ὅτι ἄκοντας ἡμᾶς εὖ ποιεῖς, &c. said Philagrius in a grievous disease.—Naz. Ep. 66.

³ Ἐπειδὴν τὸ μὴ πάσχειν οὐκ ἔχω, τοῦτό γε τῷ πάσχειν παρακερδαίνω, τὸ φέρειν, καὶ τὸ εὐχαριστεῖν.—Naz. de Se. Ep. 63.

⁴ Prov. iii. 11.

⁵ Εὐχέτο πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς ἀπλῶς τὰγαθὰ διδόναι, ὡς τοὺς θεοὺς κάλλιστα εἰδότες ὅποια ἀγαθὰ ἐσσι.—Xenoph. de Socr.—Charior est illis homo quam sibi.

dispose of us, the which (whatever we can do, however we resent it) he will effectually make use of; whence it is extremely foolish to be discontent: foolish it is to be dissatisfied with the results of his wisdom, adhering to our vain apprehensions; foolish to distrust his goodness, in compliance with our fond self-love; foolish to contest his unquestionable right and uncontrollable power, having nothing but mere impotency to oppose against them; no less than downright madness it is, to fret and fume at that which we can nowise help, to bark at that which lodgeth in heaven so far high above us, to solicit deaf necessity with our ineffectual wailings⁶; for if we think that our displeasure will affect God, that our complaints will incline him to alter our condition or comply with our wishes, we do conceit vainly, and without any ground: sooner may we, by our imagination, stop the tides of the sea, or turn the streams of rivers backward; sooner, by our cries, may we stay the sun, and change all the courses of the stars, than by our passionate resentments or mournful clamours we can check the current of affairs, or alter that state of things which is by God's high decree established⁷: discontented behaviour will rather fasten our condition, or remove it into a worse place; as it highly doth offend God, and increase our guilt, so it moveth God to continue, and to augment our evils. Thus lifting up our eyes to heaven, and considering the reference our disposition and demeanour hath to God, will induce us to bear our case contentedly.

II. Again, reflecting upon ourselves, we may observe much reason to be content with our state: in whatever capacity we look upon ourselves, it in reason becometh us, we in duty are obliged to be so⁸.

As men and creatures, we naturally are indigent and impotent; we have no just claim to any thing, nor any possession maintainable by our power; all that we have,

⁶ Ἐάν τε κλαίρης, ἄν τε μὴ, πορεύεται.—Philem.

⁷ Οὐ γὰρ τις πρῆξις πέλεται κρνεροῦ γόοιο. Il. Ω.—Σὺ δ' εἴκ' ἀνάγκη, καὶ θεοῖσι μὴ μάχου.—Eurip.

⁸ Lam. iii. 39.

or can have, cometh from most pure courtesy and bounty; wherefore, how little soever is allowed us, we have no wrong done us, nor can we justly complain thereat: such beggars as we are must not pretend to be choosers; if any thing be given us, we may be glad, we should be thankful. It is for those who have a right and a power to maintain it, to resent and expostulate if their due be withheld: but for us, that never had any thing which we could call our own; that have no power to get or keep any thing; for us, that came into the world naked and defenceless, that live here in continual, absolute, and arbitrary dependence for all our livelihood and subsistence; to contest with him that maintaineth us, or to complain of his dealing, is ridiculously absurd and vain.

Upon a moral account we have less reason to challenge aught, or to complain of any thing; for we deserve nothing but evil: if we rightly esteem and value ourselves, any thing will seem good enough for us, any condition will appear better than we deserve: duly examining the imperfections and infirmities of our nature, the disorder and depravedness of our hearts, the demeanours and enormities of our lives, we cannot but apprehend that we are even unworthy of the *crumbs which fall from our Master's table*⁹; we cannot but acknowledge with the good patriarch, that we *are less than the least of God's mercies*¹. Considering our natural unworthiness, we shall see that we deserve not so much as those common benefits which all men enjoy, and without which we cannot subsist; so that, in regard to them, we shall be ready to acknowledge with the Psalmist, *Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him; or the son of man, that thou makest account of him*²! Trying our hearts, and examining our ways, we shall soon discover it to be abundant mercy, that we are not utterly deprived of all good things, stript of all comforts, yea, dispossessed of our very being and life itself; that we are obliged to acknowledge, with those

⁹ Matt. xv. 17.

¹ Gen. xxxii. 10.

² Ps. cxliv. 3; Job vii. 27.

in the Lamentations, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not*³. Were we far better than we are, yet it would not become us to contest with him, to whose disposal and judgment we are subject; as Job teacheth us: *Behold (saith he) God taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou? If he will not withdraw his anger, the proud⁴ helpers do stoop under him. How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him? Whom, though I were righteous, I would not answer; but I would make supplication to my Judge*⁵: but for us, men so unrighteous and guilty, to debate with, to question the proceedings of our Judge, it is much more unseemly.

Nothing can be more absurd, than for men so deeply indebted, than for sinners so very obnoxious to wrath, to be aggrieved in any state: shall we, who are conscious to ourselves of so many great sins against our God; who by wilful transgressions or slothful neglects have so much affronted and offended him; who have so little requited his love, and so much abused his patience; who have borne so little fruit, and rendered him so little service; shall we be angry that our humour is not pleased in all things? shall we affect to swim in plenty, to wallow in pleasure, to bask ourselves in ease, to be fed with dainties, to be gaily clothed, to flourish in a brave and splendid condition, to be worshipped and honoured; who deserve not the meanest competence, or lowest respect; to whom it is a great favour, that we are permitted to subsist; whom strict justice would often have cast into utter misery and disconsolateness? It is not surely for such persons to be dissatisfied with any thing in this world, but to bless God's exceeding mercy that they abide there on this side of the bottomless pit: it is their part, with most submissive patience, to bear whatever is inflicted on them, humbly saying with him in the prophet, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have*

³ Lam. iii. 22.

⁵ Job ix. 12, &c. (ix. 32.)

⁴ Κίττη.

sinned against him⁶. Seeing, whatever our crosses or sufferings be, we cannot but confess to God, with those in Ezra, *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve*⁷; being gainers upon the matter, having so much of our debt remitted in effect; being, in comparison to what was due to us, very tolerably, yea very favourably dealt with, why should we be dissatisfied? If in such cases men should deal so favourably with us, we should be much pleased, and ready to thank them; why then should we take it ill of God, when he, even in his hardest proceedings against us, expresseth so much indulgence and mercy?

If we must be displeased, and lust to complain, we have reason much rather to accuse ourselves, than to exclaim at Providence; to bewail our sins, than to deplore our fortune: for our evils are not indeed so much the voluntary works of God, who *doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men*⁸, as the natural products of our sins, which we do wilfully commit⁹: it is, as the prophet speaketh, *our sins that withhold good things from us*¹, and bring evil things upon us: *fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted*². We make adversity necessary, or expedient for us; then we cry out upon it: we labour in planting, but cannot brook *the fruit of our doings*: we, like prodigals, fling away our estate in wanton profusions, then complain of want³: we affect and choose the causes, but loathe and cannot abide the certain consequences; so fond in our conceits, so perverse are we in our affections: *Wherefore doth the living man complain for the punishment of his sins*⁴? so well might the prophet demand and expostulate.

We may further, looking on ourselves, consider ourselves as servants to God, or rather as slaves, absolutely subject to his disposal; and shall any servant, shall a mere slave, presume to choose his place, or determine his rank in the family? shall he appoint to himself

⁶ Micah vii. 9.⁷ Ezra ix. 13.⁸ Lam. iii. 33.⁹ Ἀνθαίρετα πῆμα.¹ Jer. v. 25.² Ps. cvii. 17.³ Jer. xvii. 10; xxi. 14; xxxii. 19; vi. 19.⁴ Lam. iii. 39.

what office he will discharge, what garb he shall go in, what diet he must have; what he will do, and how he shall be accommodated? Is it not fit that all these things should be left to our Master's discretion and pleasure? It is most reasonable that we should thoroughly acquiesce in his determination: even a pagan philosopher could teach us that this is reasonable, who thus piously directeth his speech to God: *For the rest, use me to what thou pleasest. I do consent unto thee, and am indifferent. I refuse nothing which seemeth good to thee. Lead me whither thou wilt; put on me what garment thou pleasest. Wilt thou have me to be a governor or a private man, to stay at home or to be banished away, to be poor or to be rich? I will, in respect to all these things, apologize for thee with men*⁵. Thus did Epictetus say, and such speech well becometh our relation to God: servants should be content with their masters' appointments and allowances; they should not only themselves forbear to find fault with, but be ready to maintain his proceedings against any who shall presume to reprehend or blame them. Especially such servants as we are, who, *after we have done all things commanded us, must acknowledge that we are unprofitable servants*⁶; such as can bring no considerable benefit to our Lord, or anywise advance his state; such as, therefore, cannot challenge any wages from him, more than he out of mere favour is pleased to allow: could we by our labours enrich God, or raise him in dignity, or procure delight to him, it might seem congruous that he should answerably reward us; but as he getteth nothing by us, so we cannot require any thing from him: our best services do indeed rather need pardon, than deserve any reward: no man hath lived so well, that he can pretend any thing from God,

⁵ Χρῶ μοι λοιπὸν εἰς δὲ ἃν θέλῃς. Ὁμογνωμονῶ σοι, ἵσος εἰμί. Οὐδὲν παραιτοῦμαι τῶν σοι δοκούντων. Ὅπου θέλεις ἄγε· ἢν θέλεις ἐσθῆτα περίθεις. Ἀρχειν με θέλεις, ἰδιοτενεῖν, μένειν, φεύγειν, πένεσθαι, πλουτεῖν; ἐγὼ σοι ὑπὲρ πάντων τούτων πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀπολογήσομαι.—ARR. II. 16.

⁶ Luke xvii. 10.

that he is **not indeed** much behindhand in his accounts with God, **having** received from God far more of benefit than he **can return** to him in service: no man, without extreme presumption and arrogance, can offer to prescribe in what measure, or what manner, God should reward him.

Again, if we consider ourselves as the children of God, either by birth or nature, or by adoption and grace, how can we be discontent for any thing? Have we not thence great reason to hope, or rather to be confident, that we shall never want any good thing (necessary or convenient for us), that no great evil shall ever oppress us? For is not God hence by paternal disposition inclined, is he not in a manner by paternal duty engaged, in all needful occasions to supply and succour us? Can we, without great profaneness, and no less folly, surmise, that he, which is so immensely good, will be a bad (an unkind, or a neglectful) Father to us? No; as there is no other father in goodness comparable to him, so none, in real effects of benignity, can come near him; so our Lord assureth us: *If ye, saith he, being evil, know how to give good things unto your children; how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to his children that ask him?*⁷

If we consider ourselves as Christians, we have still more reason to practise this duty: as such, we are not only possessed of goods abundantly sufficient to satisfy our desires; we have hopes able to raise our minds above the sense of all present things; we have entertainments that ever may divert our minds, and fill our hearts with comfort: but we have also an assurance of competent supplies of temporal goods; for, *Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise both of the present life, and of that which is to come: and, If we seek first the kingdom of heaven, and its righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us*⁸. It is indeed strangely unhandsome for a Christian ever to droop, or

⁷ Matt. vii. 11.

⁸ 1 Tim. iv. 8; Matt. vi. 33.

to be disconsolate; for a friend of God, and an heir of heaven, to think he wants any thing, or fear that he shall ever want; for him, whose treasure and heart are above, to be so concerned with any thing here as deeply to resent it.

Again, if we reflect upon ourselves as rational men, how for shame can we be discontent? Do we not therein much disparage that excellent perfection of our nature? Is it not the proper work of reason to prevent things hurtful or offensive to us, when that may be done; to remove them, if they are removable; if neither of these can be compassed, to allay and mitigate them, so that we may be able well to support them? Is not its principal use to drive away those fond conceits, and to quell those troublesome passions, which create or foment disquiet and displeasure to us? If it cannot do this, what doth it signify? to what purpose have we it? Is not our condition really worse than that of brute beasts, if reason serveth only to descry the causes of trouble, but cannot enable to bear it? All the reasons we have produced, and all that we shall produce, against discontent, will, if we are reasonable men, and reason availeth any thing, have this effect upon us.

Wherefore, considering ourselves, our capacities, our relations, our actions, it is most reasonable to be content with our condition, and with whatever doth befall us.

SERMON XV.

REJOICE EVERMORE.

1 THESS. v. 16.

“Rejoice evermore.”

Rejoice evermore! O good apostle, how acceptable rules dost thou prescribe: O blessed God, how gracious laws dost thou impose! This is a rule, to which one would think all men should be forward to conform; this is a law, which it may seem strange that any man should find in his heart to disobey: for what can any soul desire more than to be always on the merry pin, or to lead a life in continual alacrity? Who readily would not embrace a duty, the observance whereof is not only pleasant, but pleasure itself? Who is so wild as to affect a sin, which hath nothing in it but disease and disgust?

That joy should be enjoined, that sadness should be prohibited, may it not be a plausible exception against such a precept, that it is superfluous and needless, seeing all the endeavours of men do aim at nothing else but to procure joy and eschew sorrow; seeing all men do conspire in opinion with Solomon, that *a man hath nothing better under the sun than—to be merry*¹. Were it not rather expedient to recommend sober sadness, or to repress the inclinations of men to effuse mirth and jollity?

¹ Eccles. viii. 15; ii. 24; iii. 12. 22; v. 18. 26.

So it may seem ; but yet, alas ! if we consult experience, or observe the world, we shall find this precept very ill-obeyed : for do we not commonly see people in heavy dumps ? do we not often hear doleful complaints ? is not this world apparently a stage of continual trouble and grief ? Did not the Preacher, upon a diligent survey of *all the works done under the sun*, truly proclaim, *Behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit*² ? Where, I pray, is any full or firm content ? where is solid and durable joy to be found ?

It is true that men, after a confused manner, are very eager in the quest, and earnest in the pursuit of joy ; they rove through all the forests of creatures, and beat every bush of nature for it, hoping to catch it either in natural endowments and improvements of soul, or in the gifts of fortune, or in the acquists of industry ; in temporal possessions, in sensual enjoyments, in ludicrous divertisements and amusements of fancy ; in gratification of their appetites and passions ; they all hunt for it, though following a different scent, and running in various tracts : some in way of plodding for rare notions ; some in compassing ambitious projects ; some in amassing heaps of wealth ; some in practice of overreaching subtilties ; some in wreaking their malice, their revenge, their envy ; some in venting frothy conceits, bitter scoffs, or profane railleries ; some in jovial conversation and quaffing the full bowls ; some in music and dancing ; some in gallantry and courting ; some in all kinds of riotous excess and wanton dissoluteness : so each in his way doth incessantly prog for joy ; but all much in vain, or without any considerable success ; finding at most, instead of it, some faint shadows, or transitory flashes of pleasure, the which, depending on causes very contingent and mutable, residing in a frail temper of fluid humours of body, consisting in slight touches upon the organs of sense, in frisks of the corporeal spirits, or in fumes and vapours twitching the imagination, do soon flag and expire ; their short enjoyment being also tempered with regret, being easily

² Eccles. i. 14.



dashed by any cross accident, soon declining into a nauseous satiety, and in the end degenerating into gall and bitter remorse; for, *Even* (as Solomon observed) *in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness*³: and, *Though*, as it is said in Job (ch. xx. ver. 12. 14. 20), *wickedness is sweet in the mouth,—yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him*⁴: so that indeed the usual delights which men affect are such, that we should not if we could, and we could not if we would, constantly entertain them; such *rejoicing evermore* being equally unreasonable and impossible.

Wherefore there is ground more than enough, that we should be put to seek for a true, substantial, and consistent joy; it being withal implied, that we should effect it in another way, or look for it in another box, than commonly men do; who therefore are so generally disappointed, because they would have it upon impossible or undue terms, and least expect it there, where it is only to be had.

It is a scandalous misprision, vulgarly admitted, concerning religion, that it is altogether sullen and sour, requiring a dull, lumpish, morose kind of life, barring all delight, all mirth, all good-humour; whereas, on the contrary, it alone is the never-failing source of true, pure, steady joy; such as is deeply rooted in the heart, immoveably founded in the reason of things, permanent like the immortal spirit wherein it dwelleth, and like the eternal objects whereon it is fixed, which is not apt to fade or cloy; and is not subject to any impressions apt to corrupt or impair it: whereas, in our text, and in many texts parallel to it, we see that our religion doth not only allow us, but even doth oblige us to be joyful, as much and often as can be, not permitting us to be sad for one minute, banishing the least fit of melancholy, charging us in all times, upon all occasions,

³ Prov. xiv. 13.

⁴ Sunt quædam tristes voluptates.—Sen. *Ep.* 67.—Quoquoversum se verterit anima hominis, ad dolores figitur, alibi præterquam in te.—Aug. *Conf.* iv. 10.

to be cheerful; supposing, consequently, that it is in some manner possible to be so, and affording power to effect what it doth require.

Such, indeed, is the transcendent goodness of our God, that he maketh our delight to be our duty, and our sorrow to be our sin, adapting his holy will to our principal instinct; that he would have us to resemble himself, as in all other perfections, so in a constant state of happiness; that as he hath provided a glorious heaven of bliss for us hereafter, so he would have us enjoy a comfortable paradise of delight here. He accordingly hath ordered the whole frame of our religion in a tendency to produce joy in those who embrace it; for what is the Gospel, but, as the holy angel, the first promulger of it, did report, *good tidings of great joy to all people*⁵? How doth God represent himself therein, but as *the God of love, of hope, of peace, of all consolation*, cheerfully smiling in favour on us, graciously inviting us to the most pleasant enjoyments, bountifully dispensing most comfortable blessings of mercy, of grace, of salvation to us⁶? for what doth our Lord call us to him, but *that he may give us rest and refreshment to our souls*; that he may *wipe away all tears from our eyes*; that he may save us from most woful despair, and settle us *in a blessed hope*; that we may *enter into our Master's joy*; that *our joy may be full*, and such as *no man can take from us*⁷?

What is the great overture of the Gospel, but the gift of a most blessed *Comforter, to abide with us for ever*⁸, cheering our hearts with his lightsome presence and ravishing consolations? Wherein doth the kingdom of heaven consist? *not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*⁹. What are the prime fruits sprouting from that root of

⁵ Luke ii. 10.

⁶ Rom. xv. 33. 13. 5; Eph. ii. 4; 2 Cor. i. 3; xiii. 11; 1 Pet. v. 10; James v. 11.

⁷ Matt. xi. 28; Apoc. vii. 17; xxi. 4; Tit. ii. 13; Matt. xxv. 21; John xv. 11; xvi. 22. 24.

⁸ John xiv. 16.

⁹ Rom. xiv. 17.

Christian life, the Divine Spirit? They are, as St. Paul telleth us, *love, joy, and peace*¹. Are there not numberless declarations importing a joyful satisfaction granted to the observers of God's commandments; that *light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart*²? Doth not our Lord pronounce a special beatitude to the practiser of every virtue? And if we scan all the doctrines, all the institutions, all the precepts, all the promises of Christianity, will not each appear pregnant with matter of joy, will not each yield great reason and strong obligation to this duty of *rejoicing evermore*?

Wherefore a Christian, as such (according to the design of his religion, and in proportion to his compliance with its dictates), is the most jocund, blithe, and gay person in the world; always in humour and full of cheer; continually bearing a mind well satisfied, a light heart and calm spirit, a smooth brow and serene countenance, a grateful accent of speech, and a sweetly composed tenor of carriage; no black thought, no irksome desire, no troublesome passion, should lodge in his breast; any furrow, any frown, any cloud, doth sit ill upon his face; the least fretful word or froward behaviour doth utterly misbecome him; if at any time it appear otherwise, it is a deflection from his character; it is a blemish and wrong to his profession; it argueth a prevarication in his judgment or in his practice; he forgetteth that he is a Christian, or hath not preserved the innocence belonging to that name. For, if a Christian remembereth what he is, or is sensible of his condition; if he reflecteth on the dignity of his person, the nobleness of his relations, the sublimity of his privileges, the greatness and certainty of his hopes, how can he be out of humour? Is it not absurd for him that is at peace with Heaven; with his own conscience, with all the world; for the possessor of the best goods, and the heir of a blessed immortality;

¹ Gal. v. 22.

² Ps. xcvi. 11; cxviii. 15; xxxii. 11; lxviii. 3.

for the friend, the favourite, the son of God, to fret or wail?

He that is settled in a most prosperous state, that is (if he pleaseth) secure of its continuance, that is well assured of its improvement; that hath whatever good he can wish in his reach, and more than he can conceive in sure reversion; what account can be given that he should be sad, or seem afflicted?

He that hath the inexhaustible spring of good for his portion; that hath his welfare intrusted in God's most faithful hand; that hath God's infallible word for his support; that hath free access to him, *in whose presence is fulness of joy*³; that hath frequent tastes of God's goodness, in gracious dispensations of Providence, in intercourses of devotion, in the influences of grace; that hath the Infinite Beauty and Excellency for the perpetual object of his contemplation and affection; that enjoyeth the serenity of a sound mind, of a pure heart, of a quiet conscience, of a sure hope, what can he want to refresh or comfort him?

If a true and perfect Christian hath no care to distract him, having discharged all his concerns on God's providence; if he hath no fear to dismay him, being guarded by the Almighty protection from all danger and mischief; if he hath no despair to sink him, having a sure refuge in the divine mercy and help; if he hath no superstitious terrors or scruples to perplex him, being conscious of his own upright intentions to please God, and confident of God's merciful willingness to accept his sincere endeavours; if he hath no incurable remorse to torment him, the stings of guilt being pulled out by the merits of his Saviour, applied by his faith and repentance; if he hath no longing desires to disquiet him, being fully satisfied with that he doth possess, or may expect from God's bounty, all other things being far beneath his ambition or coveting; if he hath no contentions to inflame him, knowing nought

³ Ps. xvi. 11.

here worth passionately striving for, and being resolved to hold a friendly good-will toward all men; if he hath no repining envy, seeing that none can be more happy than he may be, and that every man's good by charity is made his own; if he hath no fretful discontent, since he gladly doth acquiesce in the condition and success allotted to him, resigning his will to God's pleasure, taking all for best which thence doth occur, being assured that *all things shall work together for his good* and advantage; if he hath no spiteful rancours to corrode his heart, no boisterous passions to ruffle his mind, no inordinate appetites, perverse humours, or corrupt designs, to distemper his soul and disturb his life, whence then may sorrow come, or how can sadness creep into him⁴?

What is there belonging to a Christian, whence grief naturally can spring? From God, *our exceeding joy*⁵, the fountain of happiness; from heaven, the region of light and bliss; from divine truth, which illustrateth and cheereth the soul; from God's law, which *rejoiceth the heart, and is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb*⁶; from wisdom, whose *ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace*⁷; from virtue, which cureth our afflictive distempers, and composeth our vexatious passions; from these things I say, about which a Christian, as such, is only conversant, no sorrow can be derived; from those sweet sources no bitter streams can flow: but hell, the flesh, the world, darkness, error, folly, sin, and irreligion (things with which a Christian should have nothing to do, from which he should keep aloof, which he doth pretend utterly to renounce and abandon), these, these alone, are the parents of discomfort and anguish.

Wherefore there is the same reason, the same obligation, the same possibility, that we should rejoice evermore, as that we should always be Christians, exactly

⁴ Ἐπιθυμίας ἀπειλαθείσης εὐδίας ἡ ψυχὴ, καὶ γαληνῶσα γίνεται.
—Just. Mart. *ad Græc. Paræn.* 2.

⁵ Ps. xliii. 4.

⁶ Ps. xix. 10; cxix. 103.

⁷ Prov. iii. 17.

performing duty, and totally forbearing sin; for innocence and indolency do ever go together, both together making paradise; perfect virtue and constant alacrity are inseparable companions, both constituting beatitude: and as although from our infirmity we cannot attain the highest pitch of virtue, yet we must aspire thereto, endeavouring *to perfect holiness in the fear of God*^a; so, though it may not be possible to get, yet it is reasonable to seek, perpetual joy; which doing in the right way, we shall not fail of procuring a good measure of it.

Indeed, to exercise piety, and to rejoice, are the same things, or things so interwoven, that nothing can disjoin them; religious practice is like that *river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High*^b, that is, every pious soul. No good deed can be performed without satisfaction; each virtue hath a peculiar delight annexed to it: whence the acts of joy, which upon various objects, grounds, and occasions, we may exert, being numberless, I shall only touch a few principal instances.

I. We should evermore rejoice in the exercise of our faith; according to that prayer of our apostle for the Romans, *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing*¹.

Every kind of faith (that which embraceth divine truths, that which applieth God's mercy, that which ensureth God's promises, that which confideth in God's providence, each of them) is a clear spring of joy, ever standing open to us; which he that drinketh *shall never thirst*².

I. The faith which embraceth God's heavenly truth doth not only enlighten our minds, but is apt to affect our hearts; there being no article of faith, or mystery of our religion, which doth not involve some great advantage, some notable favour, some happy occurrence, dispensed to us by the goodness of God, the which

^a 2 Cor. vii. 1; Matt. v. 48; 1 John iii. 3.

^b Ps. xlv. 4.

¹ Rom. xv. 13.

² John vi. 35; vii. 38; iv. 14.

faith doth apprehend and convey to our spiritual gust, so that we cannot hardly *but receive the word with joy*³. For is it not very sweet with faith to contemplate the rich bounty of God in the creation of the world, and producing so goodly a frame, so copious a store of things, with a special regard to our sustenance and accommodation? Is it not satisfactory to believe that God, by his almighty hand and vigilant care, with the same benign regard, doth uphold and govern the same? Is it not extremely pleasant with faith to reflect on that great honour and happiness, which God did vouchsafe to confer on mankind, by sending down from heaven his only Son to assume our nature, and to converse with men, that we might be advanced to a *participation of the divine nature*⁴, and to an enjoyment of *communion with God*⁵? How without great delight can we be persuaded that our Saviour, by his meritorious obedience and passion, hath appeased God's wrath, and inclined his favour toward us, hath satisfied justice, hath expiated our offences, hath ransomed and rescued our souls from the dominion of sin and Satan, from death and corruption, from hell and everlasting torment, hath purchased immortal life and endless bliss for us? What comfort is there in being assured⁶, by the resurrection and triumph of our Lord over death, that our souls are indeed immortal, that our bodies shall be raised from the dust, that our persons are capable of an eternal subsistence in happiness? Will it not much please us with an eye of faith to behold our Redeemer sitting in glorious exaltation at God's right hand, governing the world for the benefit of his church, dispensing benediction and grace to us; interceding, as our *merciful and faithful High Priest*⁷, for the pardon of our sins, the acceptance of our prayers, the supply of our needs, and the relief of our distresses? If we be fully convinced that our Lord Jesus is the Christ, our Lord and Saviour, *the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him*⁸, how

³ Matt. xiii. 20; Phil. i. 25.

⁵ 1 John i. 3.

⁷ Heb. ii. 17; 1 John ii. 1.

⁴ 2 Pet. i. 4.

⁶ εἰδότες—2 Cor. iv. 14.

⁸ Heb. v. 9.

can we otherwise than follow those, of whom St. Peter saith, *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though ye now see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*⁹? So from the hearty belief of every evangelical truth we may suck consolation; each of them is food to our soul; and to believe it is to eat it: which how can we do without a delicious or most savoury relish¹?

2. At least methinks that faith greatly should exhilarate us, which applieth those verities (*worthy of all acceptation*²), wherein God doth open his arms wide to embrace us, proposing most kind invitations and favourable overtures of mercy, upon the fairest terms possible; together with effectual remedies for all the maladies and miseries of our souls: for if we are sensible of our heinous guilts, if we are laden with the heavy burden of our sins, if our heart is galled with sore compunction for our misdeeds, if we are struck with the *terrors of the Lord*, and *tremble with the fear of God's judgments*³; how comfortable must it be to be persuaded that God is fully reconcileable to us, is very desirous to show us mercy, and gladly will accept our repentance; that *we have an advocate with the Father*, who *hath propitiated for our sins*⁴, doth mediate for our peace, hath both full power and certain will, if we sincerely do renounce our offences, wholly to remit them! so that *there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*⁵; and that *being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ*⁶. Will not this belief revive us, and *make the broken bones to rejoice*⁷? will not the gospel of peace be hence in truth a *joyful sound* to us? might it not hence well be proclaimed in the prophet, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto*

⁹ 1 Pet. i. 8.¹ Crede et manducasti.—Aug.² 1 Tim. i. 15.³ Ps. xxxviii. 1; vi. 1; cii. 4; cxliii. 4; cxix. 120.⁴ 1 John ii. 1, 2.⁵ Rom. viii. 1.⁶ Rom v. 1.⁷ Ps. li. 8; xc. 8. 14.

her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned ⁸ ?

And if we find ourselves in habit of soul grievously distempered, labouring under great impotency and blindness, overborne and oppressed with the prevalency of corruption, pestered with unreasonable desires and passions, unable to curb our inclinations and appetites, to resist temptations, to discharge our duty in any tolerable measure, or with any ease; is it not then comfortable to believe, that we have a most faithful and skilful physician at hand to cure our distempers; that we have a powerful succour within ken to relieve our infirmities; that God is ready to impart an abundant supply of grace, of light, of spiritual strength to direct and assist us? that if any man doth lack *wisdom*, he is encouraged *with faith to ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not* ⁹ ? If any man want strength, God's Almighty Spirit is promised to those who with humble earnestness do implore it ¹; so that we may be able to do all things (incumbent on us) *by Christ who strengtheneth us* ².

3. And what more hearty satisfaction can we feel, than in a firm persuasion concerning the real accomplishment of those *exceedingly great and precious promises* ³, whereby we become capable of the most excellent privileges, the most ample benefits, the most happy rewards that can be? How can the belief, that by God's infallible word, or as surely as truth itself is true, an eternal inheritance of a treasure that cannot fail, of a glory that cannot fade, of a kingdom that cannot be shaken, of a felicity surpassing all expression and all conceit, is reserved for us, in recompense of our faithful obedience; how, I say, can that be a dead, dull, dry belief, void of sprightly comfort and pleasure?

Likewise the faith of confidence in God's good providence and paternal care over us (whatever our

⁸ Isa. xl. 1, 2.

⁹ James i. 5, 6.

¹ Luke xi. 13.

² Phil. iv. 13; Rom. vii. 25; 2 Cor. iii. 5; Phil. ii. 13.

³ 2 Pet. i. 4.

condition or circumstances be), should infuse a cheerful refreshment of heart into us.

It is in Holy Scripture most frequently asserted, that he who placeth his trust in God is a very blessed and happy person; and can we without great satisfaction partake of that beatitude? Can we, by such a trust, disburden all our solicitous cares, all our anxious fears, all the troubles of our spirit, and pressures of our condition, upon God, with strong assurance, that from his mighty power and watchful care, in due time, in the most expedient manner, we shall receive a competent supply of our wants, a riddance from our grievances, a protection from all danger and harm, a blessing upon all our good endeavours and undertakings, without feeling much ease and peace in our hearts? What can be more cheering than a persuasion that all our concerns are lodged in the hands of such a Friend, so wise, so able, so faithful, so affectionate, so ever readily disposed to help us and further our good? They who trust in God are said *to abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and to be covered with his wings*⁴; God is often styled their rock, their fortress, their shield and buckler, their defence and refuge: and are they not then impregnablely safe⁵? why then should they fear any disaster? at what occurrence should they be disturbed? Have they not huge reason to say with the Psalmist, *In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice: The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusteth in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart danceth for joy, and in my song will I praise him*⁶? May not each of those confiders in God well repress all insurrections of trouble and grief with that holy charm, *Why art thou so vexed, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? O trust in God—for he is the health of my countenance, and my God*⁷.

⁴ Ps. xci. 1; lxi. 4; xci. 4; lvii. 1; xvii. 8; xxxvi. 7.

⁵ Ps. xviii. 2; lxii. 2.

⁶ Ps. cxii. 2; lxiii. 7; xxviii. 7; (xxxiii. 21.)

⁷ Ps. xlii. 14; xliii. 5.

II. We should evermore rejoice in the practice of Christian hope, making good that aphorism of Solomon, *The hope of the righteous shall be gladness*⁸: and obeying those apostolical injunctions, that we should *rejoice in hope*; that we should *retain the confidence, and the rejoicing of hope firm to the end*⁹. Those excellent and most beneficial truths, those sweet proposals of grace and mercy, those rich promises, which faith doth apprehend as true in a general reference to all Christians, hope doth appropriate and apply as particularly touching ourselves; improving the knowledge of our common capacity into a sense of our special interest in them. God, saith our faith, will assuredly receive all penitent sinners to mercy, will crown all pious Christians with glory, will faithfully perform whatever he hath graciously promised to all people, hath a tender care for all that love and fear him; but God, saith our hope, will have mercy on me, will *render to me the wages of righteousness*, will *verify his good word to me his servant*¹, will protect, will deliver, will bless me in all exigencies: if, so being conscious of our sincere endeavour to serve and please God; if, discerning, from a careful reflection upon our heart and ways, that in some good measure with fidelity and diligence we have discharged the conditions required of us, we can entitle ourselves to God's special affection, we can accommodate his word to our case, we can assume a propriety in his regard, how can we forbear conceiving joy?

All hope, in proportion to the worth of its object, and the solidity of its ground, is comfortable; it being *the anchor of the soul*², which stayeth and supporteth it in undisturbed rest; it appeasing unquiet desires; it setting absent goods before us, and anticipating future enjoyments by a sweet foretaste³: seeing, then, if we have a good conscience, and *our heart doth not condemn*

⁸ Prov. x. 28.⁹ Rom. xii. 12; Heb. iii. 6.¹ 2 Tim. iv. 8; 1 Kings viii. 26.² Heb. vi. 19.³ Καὶ πρὸ τοῦ παραστῆναι ὑπόσχεσιν τῆς παλιγγενεσίας αὐτῇ ἡ ψυχὴ τῇ ἐλπίδι γαυρουμένη εὐφραίνεται.—Const. Ap. vii. 33.

us, our hope is grounded on *the Rock of ages*⁴ (on the immutable nature and the infallible word of God); seeing it is the hope of the most worthy, the most sublime, the most incomparable and inestimable goods, it must be most extremely delightful.

If it much pleaseth men to conceit themselves next heirs of a fair estate, to have the reversion of a good office, to be probable expectants of a great preferment (although death may intercept, or other accidents may obstruct the accomplishment of such hopes), how much more shall that *lively hope*, of which St. Peter speaketh, *of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*⁵ (which hope therefore can never be dashed or defeated), breed a most cheerful satisfaction, far transcending all other pleasures which spring from the most desirable fruitions here; according to that admonition of our Lord, *Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven*⁶!

III. We should evermore rejoice in the performing the duty of charity; both that which we owe to God, and that which is due to our neighbour.

Love is the sweetest and most delectable of all passions; and when, by the conduct of wisdom, it is directed in a rational way toward a worthy, congruous, attainable object, it cannot otherwise than fill the heart with ravishing delight. And such (in all respects superlatively such) an object is God: he infinitely beyond all other things serveth our affection, as most perfectly amiable and desirable, as having obliged us by innumerable and inestimable benefits, all the good that we have ever enjoyed, or that we can ever expect, being derived from his pure bounty; all things in the world, in competition with him, being pitifully mean, ugly, and

⁴ 1 John iii. 31; Isa. xxvi. 4.

⁵ 1 Pet. i. 4, 5.

⁶ Luke x. 20.

loathsome ; all things, without him, being vain, unprofitable, and hurtful to us ; so that the Psalmist might well say, *Who in heaven can be compared unto the Lord ? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord ? Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I can desire beside thee*⁷. He is the most proper object of our love ; for we chiefly were framed, and it is the *prime law* of our nature, to love him⁸ ; our soul from original instinct vergeth toward him as its centre, and can have no rest till it be fixed on him ; he alone can satisfy the vast capacity of our minds, and fill our boundless desires.

He, of all lovely things, most certainly and easily may be attained ; for whereas commonly men are crossed in their affection, and their love is embittered from their affecting things imaginary, which they cannot reach, or coy things, which disdain and reject their affection ; it is concerning God quite otherwise ; for,

He is most ready to impart himself, and *will not reject any that cometh unto him* ; he most earnestly desireth and wooeth our love ; he is not only most willing to correspond in affection, but doth prevent us therein, for *we love him* (saith the apostle) *because he first loved us*⁹.

He doth cherish and encourage our love by sweetest influences and most comfortable embraces, by kindest expressions of favour, by most beneficial returns, ordering that *all things shall work together for good to those who love him*¹ : and whereas all other objects do in the enjoyment much fail our expectation, he doth ever far exceed it.

Wherefore in all affectionate motions of our hearts toward God, in desiring him, or seeking his favour and friendship ; in embracing him, or setting our esteem, our good-will, our confidence on him ; in enjoying him by devotional meditations and addresses to him ; in a reflexive sense of our interest and propriety in him ; in

⁷ Ps. lxxxix. 6 ; lxxiii. 25.

⁸ Matt. xxii. 38.

⁹ John vi. 37 ; Ps. lxx. 4 ; 2 Cor. v. 20 ; John xiv. 21. 23 ; Apoc. iii. 20 ; 1 John iv. 19.

¹ Rom. viii. 28 ; 1 Cor. ii. 9.

that mysterious union of spirit, whereby we do closely adhere to him, and are, as it were, inserted in him²; in a hearty complacency in his benignity; a grateful resentment of his kindness, and a zealous desire of yielding some requital for it, we cannot but feel very pleasant transports, assuring to us the truth of that saying in the Psalm, *They that love thy name shall be joyful in thee*³; and disposing us to cry out with the Psalmist, *How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O Lord! Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee*⁴.

Indeed that celestial flame (kindled in our hearts by the Spirit of love) cannot be void of warmth; we cannot fix our eyes upon infinite beauty, we cannot taste infinite sweetness, we cannot cleave to infinite felicity, without we should also perpetually rejoice in the first daughter of love to God, charity toward men; the which in complexion and cheerful disposition doth most resemble its mother: for it doth rid all those gloomy, keen, turbulent imaginations and passions, which cloud our mind, which fret our heart, which discompose the frame of our soul (from burning anger, from storming contention, from gnawing envy, from rankling spite, from racking suspicion, from distracting ambition and avarice). It consequently doth settle our mind in an even temper, in a sedate humour, in an harmonious order, in that pleasant state of tranquillity, which naturally doth result from the voidance of irregular passions.

And who can enumerate or express the pleasures which do await on every kind, on each act, of charity?

How triumphant a joy is there in anywise doing good; whereby we feed good humour, and gratify our best inclinations; whereby we oblige our brethren, and endear ourselves to them; whereby we most resemble the divine goodness, and attract the divine favour!

St. Paul telleth us, that *God loveth a cheerful giver*; and he prescribeth that *he who sheweth mercy*, should do it, *ἐν ἡλαρότητι, with merriness*; and in the Law it is

² 1 Cor. vi. 17; Acts xi. 23; Deut. x. 20; John xv. 4. 6.

³ Ps. v. 12.

⁴ Ps. xxxvi. 7; lxxiii. 3.

commanded, *Thine heart shall not grieve, when thou givest to thy poor brother*⁵: and who indeed can out of charity give alms or show mercy without cheerfulness? seeing that he thereby doth satisfy his own mind, and doth ease his own bowels; considering that in doing good to his neighbour he receiveth far more good to himself; that he then doth put forth his stock to very great and most certain advantage; that he dischargeth an office very acceptable to God, doth much oblige him, and render him a debtor, doth engage him abundantly to requite and reward that beneficence.

What satisfaction is there in forgiving offences! whereby we discharge our souls from vexatious inmates (black thoughts and rancorous animosities); whereby we clear ourselves from the troubles attending feuds and strifes; whereby we imitate our most gracious Creator, and transcribe the pattern of our meek Redeemer; whereby we render ourselves capable of divine mercy, and acquire a good title to the pardon of our own sins; according to that divine word, *If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you*⁶.

How unconfinedly and inexhaustibly vast is that delight, which a charitable complacency in the good of our neighbour (*a rejoicing with those that rejoice*⁷) may afford! a man thence engrossing all the good in the world, and appropriating to himself all the prosperous successes, all the pleasant entertainments, all the comfortable satisfactions of his neighbour⁸. Even a charitable sympathy, or condolency, in the adversities of our neighbour, is not destitute of content⁹; for the soul is thereby melted into a gentle temper, susceptible of the best impressions; we share in the comfort which we minister to others; we are refreshed in that kindly submission to the good pleasure of God, in that light-some contemplation of God's mercy, in those comfortable hopes of a happy issue, which we suggest to the

⁵ 2 Cor. ix. 7; Rom. xii. 8; Deut. xv. 10; Eccclus. xxxv. 10.

⁶ Matt. xi. 25; xxv. 35.

⁷ 1 Cor. xiii. 6.

⁸ Rom. xii. 15.

⁹ Rom. xii. 15.

afflicted¹; we thence are disposed to a grateful sense of God's goodness, in preserving ourselves from those calamities, and in qualifying us to comfort our brethren: we feel satisfaction in reflecting upon this very practice, and observing that we do act conformably to good-nature, to the dictates of reason, to the will of God, therein discharging a good conscience, and enjoying a portion of that *continual feast*.

I should, if the time would permit, further declare how we should find delight in the contemplation of all God's attributes, of his works, of his word; in thankful resentment of all God's benefits; in willing obedience to all God's laws; how joy is a proper fruit growing on the practice of humility, of justice, of temperance, of devotion, of every virtue and grace: more particularly I should have evidenced how, from a patient submission to God's afflicting hand, from penitential contrition of heart for our sins, from a pious fear and solicitude in working out our salvation, most sweet consolations (so tempering those ingredients as to render their bitterness very savoury) may spring: but in recommending joy, I would not produce grief; and therefore shall not further annoy your patience.

¹ 2 Cor. i. 6; vii. 7.—*Συμπαράκληθῆναι*.—Rom. i. 12.

SERMON XVI.

KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE.

PROV. iv. 23.

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”

I PROCEED to the particular advantages of the practice of this duty, and the inconveniences of the neglect of it.

1. The constant and careful observation of our hearts will serve to prevent immoderate self-love and self-conceit; to render us sober and modest in our opinions concerning, and in our affections toward ourselves; qualifying us to comply with the apostolical precept, *μὴ φρονεῖν ὑπερὸ ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν*¹, that is, not to overween, or overvalue ourselves, and our own things: for he that, by serious inspection upon his own heart, shall discern how many fond, impure, and ugly thoughts do swarm within him; how averse his inclinations are from good, and how prone to evil; how much his affections are misplaced and distempered (while he vehemently delights in the possession, and impotently frets for the want of trifles, having small content in the fruition, and but slender displeasure for the absence of the greatest goods; while empty hopes exalt him, and idle fears deject him; while other various passions, like so many tempests, drive and toss him all about); who

¹ Rom. xii. 3.

shall observe, how clouds of darkness, error, and doubt, do hover upon the face of his soul; so that he quickly taketh up opinions, and soon layeth them down, and often turneth from one mistake unto another; how unsettled his resolutions are, especially in the pursuance of the best goods, and what corrupt mixtures cleave to his best purposes; who taketh notice how backward he is unto, and how cold in, devotions toward God; how little sensible of his goodness, or fearful of his displeasure, or zealous for his honour, or careful of performing his duty toward him; how little also it is that he desireth or delighteth in the good, that he pitieth and grieveth at the evil of his neighbour; how sluggish also and remiss he is in the pursuance of his own best affairs and highest concernments; he that doth, I say, frequently with heedfulness regard these imperfections and obliquities in his own heart, how can he be ravished with self-love? how can he be much taken with himself? Can any man dote upon such deformity, admire such weakness and naughtiness? No, surely: that men are so amorous of themselves, so haughty and arrogant in their conceits, doth constantly arise from not reflecting on their own hearts; not beholding themselves wistly enough in that mirror; not considering, according to just representation there, how little lovely or worthy they are: if they did practise that, they would see reason, and thence become inclinable, rather to despise, to loathe, to pity themselves.

2. Upon that advantage is consequent, that this practice will dispose us with equanimity and patience to bear all crosses and grievances befalling us²: so producing not only an excellent virtue, but a considerable solace to us; for the being conscious of so much unworthiness, which observation of our heart will necessarily discover, will not only justify the providence (so removing all just cause of complaint), but will commend the benignity of God unto us (so administering

² *Leniter ex merito quicquid patiare ferendum est.*

Ovid. Ep. 5.

good matter of thanks). It will prompt us heartily to confess with those in Ezra, that *our punishments are less than our deservings*; to join in acknowledgment with the Psalmist, that *God hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities*; to say with Jeremy, *It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not*; with Jacob, *I am less than any of thy mercies*³.

3. Particularly this practice will fence us against immoderate displeasure occasionable by men's hard opinions, or harsh censures passed on us: for he, that by inquiry into himself perceives so many defects in himself, will not so easily nor so greatly be offended, if some of them (or some like to them) be objected to him; since he finds himself truly liable to many more, and greater. Epictetus's advice is, when you are told that any man speaks ill of you, that you should not apologize, but answer only, that he was ignorant of many other faults of yours, or he would not only have mentioned those. To be disposed, without dissembling or affectation, to follow his counsel, would argue a man very intelligent of himself, and well prepared to endure happily and handsomely encounters of this kind, which every man shall be sure to meet with. None, indeed, can so contentedly brook reproach, or blame, as he that by intimate acquaintance with his own heart doth know the censure passed on him to be in effect mild and favourable; as finding himself a witness of more faults, than any adversary can accuse him of; as being a stricter examiner and severer judge of himself, than the most envious eye or disaffected mind can be. It is also some comfort, that, if censures be very outrageous, a man by knowledge of himself (by knowing his own dispositions, if his person be disfigured by a very ill character; by knowing his own purposes, if his actions be grievously aspersed) is certain they are such; that he can be as well a faithful witness and just judge for himself, as against himself.

³ Ezra ix. 13; Ps. ciii. 10; Lam. iii. 22; Gen. xxxii. 10

4. Likewise this practice will defend us, as from the discomforts of harsh censure, so from the mistakes and miscarriages to which the more favourable opinions of men, or their flattering expressions (those luscious poisons), may expose us⁴.

— Nihil est quod credere de se
Non possit, cum laudatur.—

It is not only true of great men, but even of all men: the common nature of men disposeth them to be credulous when they are commended, or receive any signification of esteem from others: every ear is tickled with this ἡδιστον ἄκουσμα, this sweet music of applause: but we are not to rely upon others' imperfect and ill-grounded judgment, so much as upon our own more certain knowledge concerning ourselves:

— ne cui de te plus quam tibi credas.

Take no man's word before thine own sense, in what concerns thine own case and character, is an advice deserving our regard and practice: for that a man in questions of this kind is able to be a skilful and indifferent umpire between himself and others; that he is neither elevated nor depressed in mind by external weights, but keepeth himself equally poised in a just consistence by his own well-informed conscience; that neither his heart is exasperated with the bitterest gall of reproach, nor his head intoxicated with the sweetest wine of flattery, is an invaluable convenience of life; or rather it is a virtue arguing a most strong and healthful constitution of soul. *How great a levity of mind, how great a vanity is it*, saith a good Father, *setting aside a man's own conscience, to follow other men's opinion (and even that feigned and forged), to be snatched away by the wind of false praise, to rejoice in being circumvented, and to receive being mocked for a benefit*⁵! From being thus abused this practice alone

⁴ Index ipse sui se totum explorat ad unguem,
Quid procures, vanique ferat quid opinio vulgi,
Securus—

⁵ Quæ hæc tanta levitas est animi, quæ tanta vanitas, relicta propria conscientia alienam opinionem sequi, et quidem fictam atque

can secure us: if we know ourselves well, we cannot so easily be deluded by the mistakes of others concerning us on either hand.

5. Likewise, further upon the same, this practice will conduce to qualify our opinions, and moderate our passions toward others; so that without intemperate anger, or bitterness, we may bear the faults, errors, and infirmities of our brethren; that we shall be benign in our carriage, and gentle in our censures even toward them who do not behave themselves so well and wisely as they should do. St. Paul thus admonisheth the Galatians: *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual* (the more spiritual, whether in truth, or in our own esteem, the more especially are we obliged hereto), *restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou may be also tempted* ⁶: σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν, looking upon, or spying into thyself; such considering ourselves, taking notice of our own infirmity within, perceiving how subject we are to the impressions of temptation, and that hence it may be our own case to fall and falter, if occasion concur with our weakness; discerning this, I say, as it will be a reason obliging, so it may be an instrument conducing to a mitigation of spirit toward those whom we see overtaken with mistake, or overborne by frailty ⁷. *Why dost thou see a mote in thy brother's eye, but dost not consider the beam in thine own eye* ⁸? is our Saviour's question. Why a man should do so, there cannot, as he implies, any good reason be assigned; it is a very unreasonable and inexcusable miscarriage: but whence a man doeth so is obvious and plain; it is because he curiously pries into other men's doings, and carelessly neglecteth the observation of his own heart. Did we reflect our sight inwards, we should be more apt to mark our own faults, and less ready to discover those of others; or, however, we should be more gently

simulatam; rapi vento falsæ laudationis, gaudere ad circumventionem suam, et illusionem pro beneficio accipere?—Hier. (vel Paulinus) *ad Celant.*

⁶ Gal. vi. 1.

⁷ Marc. Ant xi. 18.

⁸ Matt. vii. 2.

affected in regard to them: for he that knows himself a beggarly wretch, will he reproach poverty to another? he that consulting the glass doth find himself ill-favoured, will he upbraid another for want of grace or beauty? he that perceives that the dart will rebound, and thereby wound himself, will he not be careful of flinging it? will a man be forward in pronouncing a heavy sentence against another, who considers himself by plain consequence involved in the condemnation thereof? Should a man do so, he doth at least render himself incapable of apology or excuse: so we are told by St. Paul: *Every censurer* (πᾶς ὁ κρίνων) *is* (saith he) *inexcusable; for that in arraigning another he condemns himself*⁹, guilty is he of inexcusable folly, or impudence; of folly and blindness, if he see not; of extreme impudence, if, seeing his own obnoxiousness, he will not abstain from judging others for that, of which himself is guilty in the same kind, or equivalently in some other. You know how David was caught by Nathan, and unwarily adjudged himself to death¹: and so may every man expose himself, that is rigorous in censure toward others, without reflecting upon himself, and considering his own heart; wherein he shall find so much ground and matter of being angry with, and judging himself². If we will be fierce and keen, it is reason we should be so first and chiefly there, where our greatest enemies do abide, whence most mischief ariseth to us; where there is fittest matter, and justest cause of passion: thus is this practice a most proper and effectual remedy for those baneful vices of pride and peevishness in ourselves, of malignity and fury toward others. But further,

6. The observation of our heart yieldeth great advantage, in being very conducive to render men truly wise and prudent, in those things especially which most

⁹ Rom. ii. 1.

¹ 2 Sam. xii.

² Si volumus æqui rerum omnium judices esse, hoc primum nobis suadeamus, neminem esse nostrum sine culpa — *Sen. de Ira.*

Συγγνώμην ἔφη δίδοναι πᾶσι τοῖς ἀμαρτάνουσι, πλὴν ἑαυτοῦ. — Cato, Maj. Plut. p. 624.

nearly concern them; giving them to see before them, and to understand what they do; and to proceed with security; as contrarily the neglect thereof rendereth men unadvised and uncertain in their doings. A main point of prudence consisteth in suiting a man's undertakings to his powers and capacities; in not attempting things surpassing his ability or fitness; and in not declining such useful or beneficial attempts as he may well compass. Some are over bold and rash in setting upon things beyond their strength to accomplish, or skill to manage; whence commonly with shame and sorrow they are defeated in their enterprises; others are over-backward and diffident, so as not to adventure upon what they may with good advantage, or perhaps ought to perform; thence depriving themselves of the benefits they might obtain, or omitting the duties which they are obliged to: both which inconveniences usually do proceed from the not looking into and studying the heart; for the most and greatest impediments of action do lie there; being grounded upon inward indispositions, or disagreeableness of men's temper, capacity, inclination, to the matters to which they apply themselves. A tender foot will be galled and lamed, if you set it going in rugged paths; a weak head will turn, if you place it high, or upon the brink of a precipice; a soft spirit cannot well comport with boisterous employment; he, that naturally affects calm and quiet, must not hope to come off well, if he engage himself upon affairs exposed to abundance of care and tumult; nor will he, if he be well studied this way, and rightly understand himself, adventure thereupon. It was as well according to wisdom as modesty that David could say, *My heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me*³. In every undertaking two things occur to be considered: what of difficulty is found therein, and what of temptation; whether it can be done, and whether it should be done. It is a folly to

³ Ps. cxxxi. 1.

spend our care and pains upon that which is too hard for us to effect; and it is worse than so, to adventure upon that which most probably will bring us into sin, and hurt our souls; only the study of ourselves, weighing our power, and trying our temper, will prevent both: he that doeth this may commonly foresee what, the case being put, he shall do; that if such a temptation doth assault him in such circumstances, his inclinations will be apt to comply therewith, and he shall scarce be able to resist; that, for instance, he shall wax haughty in a state of dignity, become luxurious in abundance of wealth, be distracted with care in a busy employment; and therefore he will not be so forward to engage himself upon such occasions, danger and mischief being so vividly pre-represented to his sight. But he that pondereth not his own heart is ready to presume, that, be the business what it will, he shall come off well; and so unadvisedly rusheth into the snare: he assumes unwieldy burdens upon his shoulders, which he soon feeleth sorely to oppress and pain him; which he can neither bear with ease, nor put off with convenience. When, for instance, the prophet told Hazael what cruelties and rapines should, when he got power and opportunity, be committed by him; you see how he was startled at the report: *Am I a dog?*⁴ saith he; that is, Can I be so vile and base? Yes, he might himself have perceived that he should in likelihood be so; the probability of his doing as the prophet said, had been no great news to him, if he had observed his own inclinations. Good Agur, on the other side, did better understand himself, when he prayed, *Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient for me*⁵. He was conscious of natural infirmity, and therefore afraid of being in a condition that might prevail upon it; of great wealth, lest it should tempt him to forgetfulness and neglect of God (*lest*, saith he, *I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?*) of extreme want, lest it should put him upon unjust,

⁴ 2 Kings xii. 8.⁵ Prov. xxx. 8.

dishonest, and impious courses to maintain his life (*lest*, adds he, *I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain*). He saw, by looking into himself, that self-love (the root of pride and injustice) was potent in him, and formidable, when occasion should favour it; and therefore, by imploring divine aid, he strove to decline the advantages and occasions of it. It was good counsel which Xenophon tells us the oracle gave Croesus, consulting about the success of his attempt against Cyrus, *Σεαυτὸν γινώσκων εὐδαίμων Κροῖσε περήσεις*. *Knowing thyself, thou shalt pass on happily*⁶ (in the course of thy life and undertakings). Had he, considering his own ability, in relation to the dubious event of things (that as he could not promise himself good fortune, so he did not know how he should comport with bad; being not sure that he should overcome either his enemies or himself)—thus, I say, had he complied with the oracle's advice, he might have escaped the loss and sorrow which befell him. So is it with us: if we know not the burden of our vessel, we shall either put more sail to it than it can bear, or less than will suffice to carry it on; it will be overladen, or want fit ballast. If we are ignorant of our capacities, we shall either soar too high with a dangerous confidence, or grovel below in a sluggish listlessness: studying ourselves will help to preserve us in a middle pitch, will direct us in a moderate course, wherein we may proceed with sufficient courage and alacrity, with a prudent foresight, or at least with a comfortable hope of good success.

7. Near to that lies another considerable benefit attending this practice, which is, that it will help to render us expedite in our resolutions, and constant to them; consistent with ourselves, and uniform in our proceedings; whence will arise both great convenience to ourselves, and satisfaction to others with whom we deal or converse: as on the contrary side, from the neglect

⁶ De Cyri Instit. 7.

thereof, we shall become slow in deliberation, doubtful in resolution, and unstable in performance. When any occasion of acting is presented, we shall be ready to close with what is agreeable to our inclination, and not repugnant to our judgment, if by due study and experience we are acquainted with them: that acquaintance is a certain preparation to a speedy choice; and we shall upon the same grounds constantly adhere to our choice, standing upon so firm a base; and so shall neither discompose ourselves, nor disappoint others, by our irresolution and inconstancy. But he that consults not his own heart, first will dwell long upon consultation (not feeling perfectly whither his inward bias doth draw him); and when he seems, upon some superficial reason, to have determined on one side, some discordance to his own inclination, or some latent prejudice, soon discovering itself, he wavers, and at length falls off; finding that he hath promised to himself, or others, what he is unable or unwilling to perform; so, like St. James's⁷ two-souled man, he is unsteady in all his ways. The hard student of himself is like a man that hath his estate *in numerato*, in ready cash, all in his hand, or at his command; he can presently tell what he can do, and satisfy those he hath to do with. Go to him, you may know where to have him, even just where you left him, or where he uses to be; you may expect a sudden despatch, and you may rely upon his word; for he knows beforehand what he doeth, and shall continue to like; why he determines so or so; and cannot be removed from his well-grounded purpose (that which is by the philosopher termed *ratio nec dissidens, nec hæsitans*⁸, a reason that doth not strive, nor stick, he is master of). But he that neglects this practice, what he hath any title to lieth dispersed, and laid up in corners unknown to himself, so that himself cannot come readily by it; you can hardly tell where to find him; you must wait his resolution; and when it

⁷ James i. 8.

⁸ Sen. *de Vit. B.* 8.

is told you, you cannot be assured thereof, nor anywise satisfied that he will stick to his word, or his mind: he knows not thoroughly what he would have himself; can you then hope for a certain answer from him? He cannot well trust himself; can you then rely upon him? He will find himself mistaken and crossed in his own choice; can you expect less? *Quid est sapientia? semper idem velle, atque idem nolle*⁹: Constancy to a man's self is, saith he, the very being of wisdom: however, nothing more beseems a man, more commends him to society, and suits him to business, is more pleasant and grateful to those who have to do with him, than such a clear, uniform, steady disposition of mind; such a smooth and even tenor of action: nothing renders conversation and commerce more unpleasant, than a fickle lubricity of humour, and unaccountable deformity of behaviour: that study therefore is very useful, which conduceth to breed and maintain the one, and which removeth the other.

8. Again, another valuable convenience of this practice is, that it disposeth unto and preserveth a man's mind in a sober temper, agreeable to his state, and to the circumstances into which he is cast; such a temper I mean as that which the Wise Man prescribes, where he saith, *In the day of prosperity be joyful; but in the day of adversity consider*¹. It is apt to beget either a comfortable joy, or a wholesome regret, according as the interior condition of his soul (that wherein the chief cause of the one or of the other affection is grounded) doth seasonably and justly require. To be transported with mirth and jollity in a state of grievous misery, when reason itself demands sorrow and pity; to be sad and dumpish when all things flow prosperously; either of those will seem marvellously incongruous, and argue a kind of stupidity in him that so behaves himself. Now there is not in truth any calamity so disastrous as that which befalls us within ourselves, no prosperity so worthily delightful as the good proceeding of affairs in

⁹ Sen. *Ep.* 20.

¹ Eccles. vii. 14.

our souls: it is the most excellent pleasure a man is capable of, that which doth spring from the being conscious that his mind doth ἐνδοῦσθαι², as St. John speaks, that is, go well forward in a happy course, that good thoughts freely do spring up, that good inclinations are strong and prevalent, that good habits of mind wax vigorous, that the love of goodness is improved, that he generally doth thrive in health and strength spiritual. No increase of treasure can affect the covetous, no rising in power and dignity can satisfy the ambitious, no enjoyment of sensual entertainments can ravish the voluptuous man, with so true or great content, as the sensible proficiency in virtuous and pious dispositions of soul, growing *richer unto God*, and stronger in the hopes of his favour, do produce in him that doth affect it, and can perceive it: it is a joy in all respects incomparable; only wise and reasonable, pure and innocent, firm and durable. As on the other hand, if it be so, that we discern that within our hearts bad thoughts do swarm and multiply, bad appetites do sway, bad customs do encroach upon us; that desire of and delight in good things decay; that we become more dark, dull, unsettled in our spiritual apprehensions, more feeble and languid in our prosecutions of virtue, it is a great benefit to have a timely remorse prompting and urging us to endeavour a deliverance from so unhappy a condition: but no man can well either enjoy that comfortable delight, or be affected with this profitable sorrow, who doth not with a careful attention view his heart, and descry how things go there. This consideration mindeth of a further and more general advantage accruing from this practice; which is this, that,

9. A serious inspection into our hearts doth much avail toward the reformation of our hearts and lives; curing the distempers and correcting the vices of them. For to the curing any disease it is requisite to know the complexion and temper of the patient, and the part

² 3 John i. 2.

affected, and the next causes thereof. As the most grievous of bodily diseases are seated in, or do proceed from, the entrails; but not all of them from the same one of them; and the same disease depends upon the distemper sometimes of one, sometimes of another among them: so do all vices (as our Saviour expressly teacheth) issue from the heart, or interior man³; some from one, some from another part or region thereof; and the same from different parts: sometimes natural temper, sometimes false opinion, sometimes evil custom, is the root of the same kind of disease; and it is expedient we should know distinctly which of them in particular cases is the root, that accordingly we may understand what method of cure to use, whence to fetch the remedy, where to apply it; for unskilfulness in these points may frustrate our endeavours of amendment. If the mischief proceed from natural inclination, we must not hope ever utterly to subdue it, nor to free ourselves suddenly from the incursions thereof; nor is bare reasoning a proper weapon against it, it being grounded in the original constitution of the soul, either immediately, or as linked to the body; which by no operation of our mind can be soon altered; for, *No wisdom* (as Seneca speaketh well) *can remove the natural vices of body or mind; what is infixed and inbred may be allayed by art, not subdued*⁴. Reason alone and directly is not able to grapple therewith; she will break her teeth upon so tough and knotty matter: it will weary her arms in vain to swim against the rapid current of natural propension; the violent eruptions thereof may indeed somewhat be restrained; occasions of complying therewith may often be declined; it may in time, and by degrees, be weakened by subtracting the food and incentives thereof: but especially devils of this kind must, as our Saviour instructeth us, be ejected by humble, earnest, and frequent invocation

³ Matt. xv. 18.

⁴ Nulla sapientia naturalia corporis aut animi vitia ponuntur: quicquid infixum et ingenitum est lenitur arte, non vincitur.—Sen. Ep. 11.

of divine assistance; without which other means commonly will prove ineffectual. But if the vice proceed only from ill habit, or the prevalence of bad custom, we are to oppose a contrary custom thereto, presently disusing that practice, and acting otherwise; so shall we easily remove and extirpate it⁵: if neither of these causes are discernible, we may presume our indisposition is derived from ill opinion; and that consequently our best course of redressing it, is to examine the reason of the thing; to get clear and right apprehensions concerning it. For example, if we observe ourselves apt to be frequently transported with anger, let us look into our hearts, and take notice whether the root of that distemper be a choleric complexion; or whether it arise from an habitual indulgence to ourselves of being moved upon slight causes, whereby a peevish humour is grown upon us; or whether it cometh from vain conceits of ourselves, as of persons unto whom extraordinary deference and observance is due, so that no man should presume to dissent from our opinion, or contravene our desire; and as we find, so we must respectively proceed in repressing the causes of this disease; praying, if it arise from nature, to the Omnipotent (the only Lord and Commander of nature) that he would by his grace free us from that inflammable temper, and enable us to govern our passion; withal shunning occasions of being provoked; abstaining from such diet, such business, such company, as naturally do kindle or ferment that humour: if the malady grow from custom, using ourselves to bear patiently harsh words, unkind dealings, cross accidents; if our opinion dispose us thereto, reasoning ourselves into moderate conceits about ourselves, considering the reasons that may acquit or excuse others to us upon occasion of offence: using all, or some of these means, or the like, such as the observation of our heart shall discover to us to be most proper and suitable to the nature or to the cause of this distemper infesting us, we shall

⁵ Τι φθείρει τὸ ἔθος; ἐναντίον ἔθος.—Epiet.

wholly, or in good part, rid ourselves from it. Again (to adjoin another example, the matter seeming to deserve our heed), suppose we experience ourselves inclining to covetousness, eager in getting, solicitous in keeping, unwilling to part with our goods upon reasonable occasion (for the maintenance of our convenient respect in the world, or for relieving the needs of our brethren, or for serving the public, or for promoting the interests of piety and virtue); let us then look, and see whether this ariseth from a natural straitness, hardness, suspiciousness, or diffidence of heart (some such dispositions may be observed in men), or from being, by our education, or manner of life, inured to such a love of getting, or of sparing, or of tenacity; or whether it springs from conceits about the worth or the necessity of wealth (that, without being furnished with heaps of treasure, we shall come into danger of want or disgrace; we shall not be able to maintain our life, or uphold our credit; we shall not enjoy any thing, or be any bodies among men); let us, I say, by examining our hearts, find out from which of these springs this sordid disposition floweth, and accordingly strive to correct it; either praying to Almighty God, that he would enlarge and supple our heart, if it be natural to us; or addicting ourselves upon reasonable occasion to liberality and free expense, if custom hath therein prevailed upon us; or if vain surmises have seduced us, rectifying our judgments; as by other good discourses, proper against that brutish vice, so especially by considering that God is most good and bountiful, and tender of our being overwhelmed with need; that he continually watcheth over us, so that he cannot but see, and will regard what we want; and that he faithfully hath promised, if we endeavour to please him, and use a moderate diligence in honest ways to maintain ourselves, that he will yield his blessing, and never will leave us destitute. So in all cases we may proceed discreetly in the cure of our spiritual distempers, and in withstanding the temptations to sin that assault us, if we

do but search into our hearts, and learn thence, whence they flow, and by what they are nourished.

10. This practice further doth particularly serve to regulate our devotions and performances more immediately spiritual, by showing us what we need to pray for, what we are obliged to give thanks for, what it becomes us to confess and deprecate: for want thereof, we shall be apt not only to neglect, but indecently to confound, yea, miserably to pervert these duties; to confound them by praying for what is already given us, is put into our hand, or lies within our reach; for which therefore we are not to pray, but to render thanks; also by giving thanks formally for that which perhaps we are far from possessing, and do most want; so, I say, we shall be apt to confound and misplace, to render vain and chimerical, in a sort, our spiritual addresses, as wanting due ground and object; yea, to pervert them, by asking for things really prejudicial and hurtful to us (in the circumstances we stand), and thanking God for what in anger and judgment he dispenseth to us (so indeed are many appearing goods, grateful to present sense), as also deprecating things most beneficial and useful, and healthful to our souls⁶; neglecting to return thanks for what God disposeth in mercy (so are many things at present bitter and unsavoury to our carnal appetite and fancy); thus from ignorance of ourselves, and what we truly need, are we apt to pervert our devotions, not only defeating ourselves of the advantages they might yield us, but (if God be not more gracious than to hearken to us, and to grant our wishes⁷) bringing lamentable mischief on ourselves. Many examples of these confusions and perverse misapplications of devotion both Scripture affords, and experience will suggest, if we observe them. You know the comparison in the Gospel between the devotions of the Pharisee and the Publican, with the

⁶ Ps. lxxiii. 18; Heb. xii. 11.

⁷ *Evertêre domos totas optantibus ipsis*

Dî faciles, &c.

Juv. Sat. 10.

different acceptance they found⁸: the one was prompt enough to give thanks for the graces he had received, and the advantages he conceived that he had in his qualities and in his performances above others; but not having duly studied himself, did not perceive that he was rather bound to ask pardon for the pride of his heart, and the vanity that adhered to his performances, which rendered his thanksgiving very improper and unseasonable. The other being conscious of his demerits and wants, with a manner suitable to his condition, in words few, but full and fit, did confess his unworthiness (which to do did best beseem him), and implored mercy (which was the thing he chiefly needed); so was his discreet prayer better accepted than the other's impertinent thanksgiving: *I tell you* (saith our Saviour) *this man went down to his house justified rather than the other*⁹. The two sons of Zebedee, conceiting that our Lord would shortly become a great prince, and affecting to become favourites then, did confidently sue for the next place of dignity about him: our Lord repressed their fond ambition by downright telling them first, that *they knew not what they asked*¹; then by demanding of them whether they were able to undergo the trials they should meet with; implying what they should rather have requested, that they more needed humility and patience, than pomp and pleasure: and it was the same two persons, whose intemperate zeal he elsewhere checked with an οὐκ οἶδατε οἶον πνεύματος, *Ye know not of what spirit ye are*²: and no wonder, if they, who knew not what they were, did ask they knew not what; that, being ignorant of their own hearts, they should indite absurd petitions; that in such a case they should desire things not only incongruous and inconvenient, but dangerous and destructive to themselves. For to make a right distinction of these duties; to be able discreetly and pertinently, if I may so speak, to converse with God, it is requisite to look into our hearts, and from them to take fit matter, due measure,

⁸ Luke xviii.¹ Matt. xx. 22.⁹ Luke xviii. 14.² Luke ix. 55.

right season of request, and of acknowledgment respectively; things commonly not being as they appear to our present sense, or to our gross conceit, in themselves, or in their degree, good or bad; but according to the disposition of our hearts, and the effects they work upon them. That is not good which pleaseth our sense and fancy; nor that bad which disgusts them; but that is good, which rendereth our heart wiser and better, which correcteth our inclinations, composeth our affections, informeth our judgments rightly, and purifieth our intentions; that is bad, which hath contrary effects within us. We, it is likely, should pray with greatest seriousness and earnestness for the removal of those infirmities, for ease from those afflictions, which we see the holy apostles (being better instructed in things, being more acquainted with themselves) did rejoice, did glory in, did give thanks for, as finding the wholesome operation they had upon their hearts³; that by them their virtues were exercised and improved, their faith tried, their patience increased, their hope confirmed; that, to use the apostle's words, they did *in the sequel return the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who were exercised by them*⁴. But leaving this point, though deserving perhaps further consideration, I proceed, and say further, that,

11. The continual visitation of our inward parts doth not only yield much advantage (as in some measure hath been showed) at the long-run, by influence at the spring-head upon the principles and causes of action, but doth immediately conduce to good practice, preventing and stifling in the very birth many sinful and vain practices: that so many indiscreet and impertinent, so many irregular and unsavoury, so many unjust and uncharitable speeches do issue from our mouths, it is especially because we are not then employed upon this duty; are not watching over our hearts, and observing those inward fountains (levity and wantonness of thought, precipitancy and disorder of passion)

³ James i. 2; Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. xi. 6; Gal. vi. 14; 1 Pet. i. 6.

⁴ Heb. xii. 11.

from whence they overflow: were we intent there, we should perhaps endeavour to stop the current, and contain these inward bad motions from venting themselves. The like we may say concerning many unwarrantable actions, into which we inconsiderately plunge ourselves, not heeding whence they spring: did we regard that such actions were arising from ambitious, covetous, froward dispositions, or from certain ill-grounded prejudices lurking in our minds, we should often surely forbear them: but while we keep none, or bad sentinels; while in the custody of our hearts we sleep, or are drowsy; while we neglect to examine and weigh our actions, what they are and whence they come, they (although very bad and hurtful) do steal by us, and pass as friends, and we hear no more of them, but in their woful consequences. What efficacy the consideration of God's omnipresent eye, beholding all our doings, hath, and how all wise men do press it as a powerful means to contain us from bad action, you cannot but well know; as likewise that some of them, in order to the same purpose, direct us to conceive ourselves always under the inspection of some person especially venerable for his worth, or for his relation to us, whom we should be afraid or ashamed to displease⁵: and surely, were the faith concerning God's presence, or the fancy concerning the presence of a Cato, or a Lælius, strong enough, they could not but have great effect: however, did we but live even in our own presence, under the eye of our own judgment and conscience; regarding not only the matter and body, but the reason and ground, that is, the soul, of our actings; even that would do much; the love and reverence of ourselves would somewhat check and control us; we should fear to offend, we should be ashamed to vilify even ourselves by fond or foul proceedings; it would, in the philosopher's esteem, supply the room of any other keeper or monitor, if we could thus keep ourselves⁶; *If (saith he) we have so far profited, as to have*

⁵ Sen. *Ep.* xi. 25.⁶ Sen. *Ep.* 25.

*got a reverence of ourselves, we may then well let go a tutor, or pedagogue*¹.

12. This practice doth much conduce to the knowledge of human nature, and the general dispositions of mankind, which is an excellent and most useful part of wisdom: for the principal inclinations and first motions of the soul are like in all men; whence he that by diligent study of himself hath observed them in his own soul, may thence collect them to be in others; he hath at least a great advantage of easily tracing them, of soon descrying them, of clearly perceiving them in those he converseth with; the which knowledge is of great use, as directing us how to accommodate ourselves in our behaviour and dealing with others.

No man indeed can be a good instructor or adviser in moral affairs, who hath not attained this skill, and doth not well understand the nature of man: his precepts and rules will certainly be fallacious, or misapplied, without it: this is that, which rendered the dictates of the Stoics and other such philosophers so extravagant and unpracticable, because they framed them not according to the real nature of man, such as is existent in the world, but according to an idea formed in their own imaginations.

Some caution indeed is in this matter to be used, that those motions of soul, which proceed from particular temper and complexion, from supervenient principles or habits, may be distinguished from those which are natural and common unto all: which distinction to make, is of great use and benefit, in order to the governing, restraining, or correcting them.

If there be any in us, which are not observable in any other men; or in other men, which are not in us; those do not arise from common nature, but from the particular disposition of one or other respectively.

13. I add lastly, that universally this practice is requisite and necessary for the well governing of our

¹ Cum jam profeceris tantum, ut sit tibi etiam tui reverentia, licebit dimittas pædagogum.—Seneca.

heart. Politicians inculcate much, that, to the well governing of a people, squaring fit laws for it, and keeping it in good order, the nature and humour of that people should be chiefly heeded and well understood ; for that the grave Romans and light Greeks, the soft Persians and stout Germans, the subtle Africans and gross Scythians, would not be well managed in the same manner. So to govern any man's heart (since the hearts of men, as their faces, and as their voices, differ according to diversities of complexion, of age, of education, of custom, and manner of living), it conduceth to know how it is disposed from any of those, or the like causes^a. But how we are to guide and govern our hearts, and what particular influence this practice hath thereupon, I reserve for other meditations ; when we shall endeavour more distinctly to show how we may apply our thoughts to due objects ; how curb and correct our inclinations ; how order our passions ; how rectify our opinions ; how purify our intentions : now I conclude with the good Psalmist's requests to God Almighty : *Teach us thy way, O Lord ; unite our hearts to fear thy name. Give us understanding, and we shall keep thy law ; yea, we shall observe it with our whole heart. Search us, O God, and know our hearts ; try us, and know our thoughts ; see if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting*^b. Amen.

^a Vide Naz. Orat. 1.

^b Ps. lxxxvi. 11 ; cxix. 34 ; cxxxix. 23, 24.

SERMON XVII.

OF INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

ECCLES. ix. 10.

“ Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.”

IN St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, among divers excellent rules of life, prescribed by that great master, this is one, Τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί, *Be not slothful in business*¹, or *to business*; and in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, among other principal virtues or worthy accomplishments, for *abounding* wherein the apostle commendeth those Christians, he ranketh *all diligence*², or industry exercised in all affairs and duties incumbent on them: this is that virtue, the practice whereof in this moral precept or advice the royal Preacher doth recommend unto us; being indeed an eminent virtue, of very general use, and powerful influence upon the management of all our affairs, or in the conduct of our whole life.

Industry, I say, in general, touching all matters incident, which *our hand findeth to do*, that is, which dispensation of Providence doth offer, or which choice of reason embraceth, for employing our active powers of soul and body, the Wise Man doth recommend; and to pressing the observance of his advice (waving all curious remarks, either critical or logical upon the

¹ Rom. xii. 11.

² Πᾶσα σπουδή.—2 Cor. viii. 7.

words) I shall presently apply my discourse, proposing divers considerations apt to excite us thereto; only first, let me briefly describe it, for our better apprehension of its true notion and nature.

By Industry we understand a serious and steady application of mind, joined with a vigorous exercise of our active faculties, in prosecution of any reasonable, honest, useful design, in order to the accomplishment or attainment of some considerable good; as, for instance, a merchant is industrious who continueth intent and active in driving on his trade for acquiring wealth; a soldier is industrious who is watchful for occasion, and earnest in action, toward obtaining the victory; and a scholar is industrious who doth assiduously bend his mind to study for getting knowledge.

Industry doth not consist merely in action; for that is incessant in all persons; our mind being a restless thing, never abiding in a total cessation from thought or from design³; being like a ship in the sea, if not steered to some good purpose by reason, yet tossed by the waves of fancy, or driven by the winds of temptation somewhither. But the direction of our mind to some good end, without roving or flinching, in a straight and steady course, drawing after it our active powers in execution thereof, doth constitute industry; the which therefore usually is attended with labour and pain; for our mind (which naturally doth affect variety and liberty, being apt to loathe familiar objects, and to be weary of any constraint) is not easily kept in a constant attention to the same thing; and the spirits employed in thought are prone to flutter and fly away, so that it is hard to fix them: and the corporeal instruments of action being strained to a high pitch, or detained in a tone, will soon feel a lassitude somewhat offensive to nature; whence labour or pain is commonly reckoned an ingredient of industry; and laboriousness is a name signifying it; upon which account this virtue, as involv-

³ Ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ φύσιν ἔχουσα τοῦ κινεῖσθαι διαπαντός, οὐκ ἀνέχεται ἡρεμεῖν, ἔμπρακτον τὸ ζῶον τοῦτο ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεός, &c.—Chrys. in Act. Or. 35.

ing labour, deserveth a peculiar commendation ; it being then most laudable to follow the dictates of reason, when so doing is attended with difficulty and trouble.

Such in general I conceive to be the nature of industry ; to the practice whereof the following considerations may induce.

1. We may consider that industry doth befit the constitution and frame of our nature ; all the faculties of our soul and organs of our body being adapted in a congruity and tendency thereto : our hands are suited for work, our feet for travel, our senses to watch for occasion of pursuing good and eschewing evil, our reason to plod and contrive ways of employing the other parts and powers ; all these, I say, are formed for action ; and that not in a loose and gadding way, or in a slack and remiss degree, but in regard to determinate ends, with vigour requisite to attain them : and especially our appetites do prompt to industry, as inclining to things not obtainable without it ; according to that aphorism of the Wise Man, *Ἐπιθυμία ὀκνηρὸν ἀποκτείνουσιν*—*The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour*⁴ ; that is, he is apt to desire things which he cannot attain without pains ; and, not enduring them, he for want thereof doth feel a deadly smart and anguish : wherefore in not being industrious we defeat the intent of our Maker ; we pervert his work and gifts ; we forfeit the use and benefit of our faculties ; we are bad husbands of nature's stock.

2. In consequence hereto industry doth preserve and perfect our nature, keeping it in good tune and temper, improving and advancing it toward its best state. The labour of our mind in attentive meditation and study doth render it capable and patient of thinking upon any object or occasion, doth polish and refine it by use, doth enlarge it by accession of habits, doth quicken and rouse our spirits, dilating and diffusing them into their proper channels. The very labour of our body doth keep the organs of action sound and clean, discussing

⁴ Prov. xxi. 25 ; xiii. 4.

fogs and superfluous humours, opening passages, distributing nourishment, exciting vital heat: barring the use of it, no good constitution of soul or body can subsist; but a foul rust, a dull numbness, a resty listlessness, a heavy unwieldiness, must seize on us⁵; our spirits will be stifled and choked, our hearts will grow faint and languid, our parts will flag and decay; the vigour of our mind and the health of our body will be much impaired.

It is with us as with other things in nature⁶, which by motion are preserved in their native purity and perfection, in their sweetness, in their lustre; rest corrupting, debasing, and defiling them. If the water runneth, it holdeth clear, sweet, and fresh; but stagnation turneth it into a noisome puddle: if the air be fanned by winds, it is pure and wholesome; but from being shut up, it groweth thick and putrid: if metals be employed, they abide smooth and splendid; but lay them up, and they soon contract rust: if the earth be belaboured with culture, it yieldeth corn; but, lying neglected, it will be overgrown with brakes and thistles⁷; and the better its soil is, the ranker weeds it will produce: all nature is upheld in its being, order, and state, by constant agitation; every creature is incessantly employed in action conformable to its designed end and use; in like manner the preservation and improvement of our faculties depends on their constant exercise.

3. As we naturally were composed, so by divine appointment we were originally designed for industry; God did not intend that man should live idly, even in his best state, or should enjoy happiness without taking pains; but did provide work enough even in Paradise itself: for *the Lord God* (saith the text) *took man, and*

⁵ Πάντα γὰρ ἡ ἀργία βλάπτει, καὶ τὰ μέλη σώματος αὐτὰ, &c. —Chrys. *in Act. Orat.* 35.

Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ τοιούτου τὸ σῶμα ἔκλυτον, &c.—Ibid.

⁶ Ποῖος ἵππος χρήσιμος, ὁ τρυφῶν, ἢ ὁ ἐργαζόμενος; ποῖα ναῦς, ἢ πλέουσα, ἢ ἡ ἀργοῦσα; ποῖον ὕδωρ, τὸ τρέχον, ἢ τὸ ἐστῶς; ποῖος σίδηρος, ὁ κείμενος, ἢ ὁ ἐργαζόμενος; &c.—Ib.

⁷ Neglectis urenda filix innascitur agris.—Hor. *Ser.* i. 3.—Plut. *περὶ Παιδῶν Ἀγωγῆς*, p. 3. edit. Steph.

put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it^a; so that had we continued happy, we must have been ever busy, by our industry sustaining our life, and securing our pleasure; otherwise weeds might have overgrown Paradise, and that of Solomon might have been applicable to Adam: *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding: and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof*⁹.

4. By our transgression and fall the necessity of industry (together with a difficulty of obtaining good, and avoiding evil) was increased to us; being ordained both as a just punishment for our offences, and as an expedient remedy of our needs: for thereupon *the ground was cursed to bring forth thorns and thistles to us*¹: and it was our doom pronounced by God's own mouth, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground*²: so that now labour is fatally natural to us; now *man* (as Job saith) *is born to labour, as the sparks fly upward* (or, *as the vulture's chickens soar aloft*³, according to the Greek Interpreters⁴).

5. Accordingly, our condition and circumstances in the world are so ordered as to require industry; so that without it we cannot support our life in any comfort or convenience; whence St. Paul's charge upon the Thesalonians, that *if any one would not work, neither should he eat*⁵, is in a manner a general law imposed on mankind by the exigency of our state, according to that of Solomon: *The idle soul shall suffer hunger*: and, *The sluggard who will not plough by reason of the cold, shall beg in harvest, and have nothing*⁶.

Of all our many necessities none can be supplied without pains, wherein all men are obliged to bear a

^a Gen. ii. 15.

⁹ Prov. xxiv. 30, 31.

¹ Gen. iii. 17.

² Gen. iii. 19.

³ Job v. 7.

⁴ 'Αλλ' ἄνθρωπος γεννᾶται κόπῳ· νεοσσοὶ δὲ γυπὸς ὑψηλὰ πέτονται. LXX. Interp. "Now great travail (as the son of Sirach saith) is created for every man (ἀσχολία μεγάλη ἐκτίσται παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, &c. Ecclus. xl. 1); and a heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, &c."

⁵ 2 Thess. iii. 10.

⁶ Prov. xix. 15; xx. 4.

share; every man is to work for his food, for his apparel, for all his accommodations, either immediately and directly, or by commutation and equivalence; for the gentleman himself cannot (at least worthily and inculpably) obtain them otherwise than by redeeming them from the ploughman and the artificer by compensation of other cares and pains conducive to public good.

The wise poet did observe well when he said,

— Pater ipse colendi
Haud facilem esse viam voluit.—Virgil. *Georg.* i.

And St. Chrysostom doth propose the same observation, that God, to whet our mind', and keep us from moping, would not that we should easily come by the fruits of the earth, without employing much art and many pains; in order thereto there must be skill used in observing seasons, and preparing the ground; there must be labour spent in manuring, in delving, and ploughing, in sowing, in weeding, in fencing it; there must be pains taken in reaping, in gathering, in laying up, in threshing, and dressing the fruit ere we can enjoy it: so much industry is needful to get bread; and if we list to fare more daintily, we must either hunt for it, using craft and toil to catch it out of the woods, the water, the air; or we must carefully wait on those creatures, of which we would serve ourselves, feeding them that they may feed us; such industry is required to prevent mankind from starving. And to guard us from other inconveniences, mischiefs, and dangers surrounding us, it is no less requisite; for, to shelter us from impressions of weather, we must spin, we must weave, we must build; and in order thereto we must scrape into the bowels of the earth to find our tools; we must sweat at the anvil to forge them for our use; we must frame arms to defend our safety and our store

' Διὰ τοῦτο εἰς ἀνάγκην κατέστησεν ἐργασίας ὁ Θεὸς, &c.—Chrys. in Act. *Hom.* 35.

— curis acuens mortalia corda;
Nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.—Virg. *Georg.* i.

from the assaults of wild beasts, or of more dangerous neighbours, wild men. To furnish accommodations for our curiosity and pleasure, or to provide for the convenience and ornament of our life, still greater measures of industry are demanded; to satisfy those intents a thousand contrivances of art, a thousand ways of trade and business do serve, without which they are not attainable. In whatever condition any man is, in what state soever he be placed, whatsoever calling or way of life he doth embrace, some peculiar business is thence imposed on him, which he cannot with any advantage or good success, with any grace, with any comfort to himself, or satisfaction to others, manage without competent industry: nothing will go on of itself, without our care to direct it, and our pains to hold it and forward it in the right course: all which things show that divine wisdom did intend that we should live in the exercise of industry, or not well without it; having so many needs to be supplied, so many desires to be appeased thereby; being exposed to so many troubles and difficulties, from which we cannot extricate ourselves without it. But further yet,

6. Let us consider that industry hath annexed thereto, by divine appointment and promise, the fairest fruits, and the richest rewards: all good things (being either such in themselves, or made such by human esteem) are the fruits of industry; ordered to sprout from it, under the protection and influence of God's blessing, which commonly doth attend it.

All good things, indeed, are the gifts of God, and freely dispensed by his hand; but he doth not give them absolutely without condition, nor miraculously without concurrence of ordinary means; by supporting our active powers, and supplying needful aid to our endeavours; by directing and upholding us in the course of our action; by preventing or removing obstacles that might cross us; by granting that final success which dependeth on his pleasure, he doth confer them on us; our hand commonly is God's hand, by which he

worketh good, and reacheth out benefits to us; governing and wielding it as he pleaseth¹.

God, indeed, could not well proceed otherwise in dispensing his favours to us; not well, I say; that is, not without subverting the method of things which himself hath established; not without slighting and voiding his own first bounty, or rendering the common gifts of nature (our reason, our senses, our active powers) vain and useless; not without making us incapable of any praise, or any reward², which suppose works achieved by our earnest endeavour; not without depriving us of that sweetest content, which springeth from enjoying the fruit of our labour.

Hence it is, that whatever in holy Scripture is called the gift of God, is otherwhile affirmed to be the effect of industry; it being the usual condition upon which, and the instrument whereby, divine Providence conveyeth good things to us³: what God said to Joshua, doth imply the general method of his proceeding, *Only be thou strong and courageous—that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest*⁴.

Hence whatever we are directed to pray for, we are also exhorted to work for⁵; declaring thereby, that we are serious in our devotion, and do not mock God, asking that of him which we deem not worth our pains to acquire. It was well said of Cato in Sallust, *Vigilando, agendo, bene consulendo, prospere omnia cedunt: ubi socordiae te atque ignaviae tradideris, nequicquam deos*

¹ Ps. xxxvii. 3. 23; Prov. iii. 6.—*Dii laboribus omnia vendunt.*—Judges vi. 36; vii. 7; 2 Kings v. 2; Josh. i. 7. 9.

² Καὶ τινος ἐμελλες λαμβάνειν τὸν μισθόν, εἰ τὸ πᾶν ἐμελλεν ἔσεσθαι τοῦ Θεοῦ.—Chrys. in Eph. Orat. 2.

³ Περὶ ἐκεῖνα μᾶλλον ἡ ψυχὴ διάκειται, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἔκαμε· διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πόρους ἀνέμιξεν ἀρετῇ οἰκειῶσαι αὐτῇ ταύτην βουλόμενος.—Chrys. in Joh. Or. 36.

⁴ Διὰ τοῦτο οὐ τὸ πᾶν ἑαυτοῦ ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ' ἀφῆκέ τι ἐφ' ἡμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα εὐπρόσωπον λάβῃ πρόφασιν τοῦ δικαίως ἡμᾶς στεφανοῦν.—Chrys. tom. 5; Or. 28.

⁵ Josh. i. 7.

⁶ Αὐτός τι νῦν δρῶν, εἴτα τοὺς θεοὺς κάλει.—Cato apud Sal. in Bello Catil.—Τὰν χεῖρα ποτιφέροντα δεῖ τὰν τύχαν ἐπικαλεῖν.—Plut. Apoph. Lac.

implores; irati, infestique sunt. We are bid to pray even for our daily bread, yet we may starve if we do not work for it; and in St. Paul's judgment deserve to do so.

Hence we are bound to thank God for all those things, for the want of which we must thank ourselves, and condemn our own sloth.

Hence, although we should cast our care on God, and rely on his providence, being solicitous for nothing; yet we must not so trust him as to tempt him, by neglecting the means, which he doth offer, of relieving ourselves; to be presumptuously slothful being no less blameable, than to be distrustfully careful.

Hence God in all such cases, when we do need any good thing, is said to be our helper and succourer to the obtaining it; which doth imply that we must co-operate with him, and join our forces to those which he doth afford; so that as we can do nothing without him, so he will do nothing without us; yea, so that sometime we are said also to help God; *Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty*⁴. If ever God doth perform all without human labour conspiring, it is only in behalf of those who are ready to do their best, but unable to do any thing, being overpowered by the insuperable difficulty of things: but he never doth act miracles, or control nature; he never doth stretch forth his arm, or interpose special power, in favour of wilful and affected sluggards.

In fine, it is very plain both in common experience, declaring the course of Providence, and in holy Scripture, expressing God's intention, that Almighty God doth hold forth all good things as the prizes and recompences of our vigilant care, and painful endeavour; as by surveying particulars we may clearly discern.

Nothing is more grateful to men, than *prosperous*

⁴ Judges v. 23; Ps. lxxii. 12; xxii. 11; 2 Cor. xii. 10; 2 Chron. xiv. 11; 1 Sam. xiv. 6.

success in their undertakings, whereby they attain their ends, satisfy their desires, save their pains, and come off with credit; this commonly is the effect of industry⁵ (which commandeth fortune, to which all things submit and serve), and scarce ever is found without it: an industrious person, who as such is not apt to attempt things impossible or unpracticable, can hardly fail of compassing his designs, because he will apply all means requisite, and bend all his forces thereto; striving to break through all difficulties, and to subdue all oppositions thwarting his purposes: but nothing of worth or weight can be achieved with half a mind, with a faint heart, with a lame endeavour: any enterprise undertaken without resolution, managed without care, prosecuted without vigour, will easily be dashed, and prove abortive, ending in disappointment, damage, disgrace, and dissatisfaction: so the Wise Man doth assure us: *The soul* (saith he) *of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat*⁶: the one pineth away with ineffectual and fruitless desires; the other thriveth upon satisfaction in prosperous success.

Plentiful accommodations for our sustenance and convenience all men will agree to be very desirable⁷; and these are indeed the blessings of him who *visiteth the earth and enricheth it*; who *crowneth the year with his goodness*, and *whose clouds drop fatness*⁸; but they are so dispensed by Heaven, that industry must concur therewith in deriving them to us, and sloth will debar us of them; for *he*, saith the holy Oracle, *that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: and the thoughts of the diligent alone tend to plenteousness*; but *the sluggard shall beg in harvest, and have nothing*; and *the idle soul shall suffer hunger*⁹.

⁵ Τῆς ἐπιμελείας πάντα δοῦλα γίγνεται.—Antiph.

Quodcunque imperavit sibi animus, obtinuit, &c.—Sen. *de Ira*, ii.

12.

⁶ Prov. xiii. 4; xxi. 25.

⁷ Prov. xv. 30.

⁸ Ps. lxxv. 9. 11.

⁹ Prov. xii. 11; xxi. 5; (*deest in LXX.*) Prov. xx. 4; xix. 15.

Wealth is that which generally men of all things are wont to affect and covet with most ardent desire, as the great storehouse of their needs and conveniences, the sure bulwark of their state and dignity; the universal instrument of compassing their designs and pleasures; and most evident it is, that in the natural course of things, industry is the way to acquire it, to secure it, to improve and enlarge it; the which course, pursued innocently and modestly, God will be so far from obstructing, that he will further and bless it; for that indeed it would be a flaw in Providence, if honest industry, using the means it affordeth, should fail of procuring a competency; which, joined with a pious contentedness, in St. Paul's computation, is *great wealth*. Wherefore although Solomon telleth us that *the blessing of the Lord is that which maketh rich*; yet doth he not forget or contradict himself, when he also doth affirm, that *the hand of the diligent maketh rich*; and that *he who gathereth by labour shall increase*¹; because God blesseth the industrious, and by his own hand, as the most proper instrument, maketh him rich. When the Preacher said, *There is a man to whom God hath given riches and wealth*², he knew well enough what man it was, to whom God giveth them; and that sluggards were not fit objects of that liberality: for he had observed it to be their doom to be poor and beggarly, their nature to waste and embezzle an estate: he could assure us, that *drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags*; he could propound it as a certain observation, that *he who is slothful in his work is brother to a great waster*³; or that want of industry in our business will no less impair our estate, than prodigality itself; he could more than once warn the slothful, that if he did *sleep on*⁴, or persist in his sluggish way, indigency

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 6; Prov. xv. 16; x. 22; xxii. 4; 1 Chron. xxix. 12; Eccles. v. 19; Prov. x. 4; xiii. 11.

² Eccles. vi. 1, 2.—St. Paul exhorteth to *work with our hands*, ἵνα μηδενὸς χρεῖαν ἔχητε.—1 Thess. iv. 11.

³ Prov. xxiii. 21; xviii. 9.

⁴ Prov. x. 4.

would surprise and seize on him with an insupportable violence: *So (saith he) shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man*⁵.

Another darling of human affection (and a jewel indeed of considerable worth and use in our life) is honour, or reputation among men: this also plainly, after the common reason and course of things, is purchased and preserved by industry: for he that aspires to worthy things, and assayeth laudable designs, pursuing them steadily with serious application of heart, and resolute activity, will rarely fail of good success, and consequently will not miss honour, which ever doth crown victory: and if he should hap to fail in his design, yet he will not lose his credit; for having meant well, and done his best, all will be ready to excuse, many to commend him; the very qualities which industry doth exercise, and the effects which it doth produce, do beget honour, as being ornaments of our person and state. God himself (from whom *honour cometh*⁶, and whose special prerogative it is to bestow it, he, as King of the world, being the fountain of honour) will be concerned to dignify an industrious management of his gifts with that natural and proper recompence thereof; conducting him who fairly treadeth in the path of honour, that he shall safely arrive unto it. It is therefore a matter of easy observation, which the wise prince doth prompt us to mark: *Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men*⁷: that is, diligence, as it is the fairest, so it is the surest way to the best preferment; as it qualifyeth a man for employment, and rendereth him useful to the world, so it will procure worthy employment for him, and attract the world to him; as the same great author again doth assert: *The hand (saith he) of the diligent shall bear rule*⁸; yea, so honourable a thing is industry itself, that an exercise thereof in the meanest rank is productive of esteem, as

⁵ Prov. vi. 11; xxiv. 34.

⁶ 1 Chron. xxix. 12; Dan. v. 18; Eccles. v. 19.

⁷ Prov. xxii. 29.

⁸ Prov. xii. 24.

the Wise Man again doth observe and tell us: *He that waiteth on his master* (that is, with diligence attendeth on the business committed to him) *shall be honoured*⁹.

- No industrious man is contemptible; for he is ever looked upon as being in a way of thriving, of working himself out from any straits, of advancing himself into a better condition. But without industry we cannot expect any thing but disrespect, shame, and reproach, which are the certain portion of the slothful; he not having the heart to enterprise, or the resolution and patience to achieve any thing deserving regard, or apt to procure it; he wanting all the ornaments and good fruits that grow from industry; he being only fit for a sordid and servile condition; whence *the slothful* (saith Solomon) *shall be under tribute*; and, *He that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame*¹: he causeth it to his relations by his beggarly accoutrements; he causeth it much more to himself by his despicable faultiness, and by the disgraceful consequences of it.

Another yet more precious good, far surpassing all external advantages of our state; the which, in the judgment of him who (together with it having a full possession of all secular prosperity, wealth, dignity, and power) was best able to prize it, *is better than rubies, and incomparably doth excel all things that may be desired*², as ennobling, enriching, and embellishing our better part: Wisdom, I mean, or a good comprehension and right judgment about matters of highest importance to us, is the prize of industry, and not to be gained without it; nature conferreth little thereto³, fortune contributeth much less; it cannot be bought at any rate; *It cannot* (saith Job) *be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire*⁴; it is the offspring of watchful obser-

⁹ Prov. xxvii. 18.—Ὁς φυλάσσει τὸν ἑαυτοῦ κύριον, τιμηθήσεται.

¹ Prov. xii. 24.—Δόλιοι δὲ ἔσονται ἐν προνομῇ.—Prov. x. 5.

² Prov. viii. 11; iii. 14, 15; iv. 7; Job xxviii. 18.

³ Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium.—Hor. *de Arte Poet.*

⁴ Job xxviii. 15, 16.

vation and experience, of serious meditation and study; of careful reflection on things, marking, comparing, and weighing their nature, their worth, their tendencies and consequences: these are needful to the getting of wisdom, because truth, which it seeketh, commonly doth not lie in the surface, obvious to a superficial glance, nor only dependeth on a simple consideration of few things; but is lodged deep in the bowels of things, and under a knotty complication of various matters; so that we must dig to come at it, and labour in unfolding it: nor is it an easy task to void the prejudices springing from inclination or temper, from education or custom, from passion and interest, which cloud the mind, and obstruct the attainment of wisdom.

If we will have it, we must get it as Solomon himself did, that great master of it. How was that? *I gave* (saith he) *my heart to know wisdom*. He who made it his option and choice before all things; who so earnestly and so happily did pray for it; upon whom it is so expressly said, that God in a special manner and plentiful measure did bestow it⁵; who averreth God to be the sole donor of it (for, *The Lord*, saith he, *giveth wisdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding*⁶); yet even he did first give his heart to it, before it was given into his heart; he did not only gape for it, to receive it by mere infusion; but he worked and studied hard for it. He was indeed a great student, an inquisitive searcher into nature, a curious observer of the world, a profound considerer and comparer of things; and by that industrious course, promoted by divine blessing, he did arrive to that great stock of so renowned a wisdom.

And the same method it is which he prescribeth to us for getting it; exhorting us, that we *incline our ear unto wisdom, and apply our heart to understanding*; that we *cry after knowledge, and lift up our voice for understanding*; that we *seek her as silver, and search*

⁵ Eccles. i. 17; ii. 3; 1 Kings iii. 9; iv. 29; Wisd. viii. 21; ix. 17; Eccles. ii. 26; James i. 5.

⁶ Prov. ii. 6.

*for her as for hid treasure*⁷; in following which course he doth assure us of good success; for, *then* (saith he) *shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God*, which is the head or chief part of wisdom: and, *Blessed* (saith he again, in the person and place of wisdom itself) *is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For he that findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord*⁸. It is the way, he supposeth, of finding wisdom, to watch assiduously, to wait diligently upon the means of attaining her; and how infallible the acquist of her is thereby, she doth again by his mouth thus acquaint us: *I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me; and she* (saith his imitator) *is easily seen of them that love her, and found of such as seek her: whoso seeketh her early shall have no great travel; for he shall find her sitting at his doors*⁹.

This indeed is the only way; idleness is not capable of so rich and noble a purchase: a slothful person may be conceited, yea, needs must be so; but he can never be wise: *A sluggard* (saith Solomon) *is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason*¹; this conceit of wisdom is a natural issue of his ignorance; and it is indeed no small part of his folly, that he doth not perceive it; being no less stupid in reflection on his own mind, than in considering other matters: being always in a slumber, he will often fall into such pleasant dreams; and no wonder that he should presume upon abundance of knowledge, who, not listing to take any pains in the search or discussion of things, doth snatch the first appearances, doth embrace every suggestion of his fancy, every conceit gratifying his humour, for truth.

What should I speak of learning, or the knowledge of various things, transcending vulgar apprehension? Who knoweth not that we cannot otherwise reach any part of that, than by assiduous study and contemplation? Who doth not find that all the power in the world is

⁷ Prov. ii. 2—4.

⁹ Prov. viii. 17; Wisd. vi. 12—14.

⁸ Prov. viii. 34, 35.

¹ Prov. xxvi. 16.

not able to command, nor all the wealth of the Indies to purchase one notion? Who can be ignorant that no wit alone or strength of parts can suffice, without great industry, to frame any science, to learn any one tongue, to know the history of nature or of Providence? It is certainly by Horace's method ²,

Multa tulit, fecitque puer,—

by much exercise and endurance of pains, that any one can arrive to the mark of being learned or skilful in any sort of knowledge.

But further yet, Virtue, the noblest endowment and richest possession whereof man is capable; the glory of our nature, the beauty of our soul, the goodliest ornament and the firmest support of our life³; that also is the fruit and blessing of industry; that of all things most indispensably doth need and require it. It doth not grow in us by nature, nor befall us by fortune; for nature is so far from producing it, that it yieldeth mighty obstacles and resistances to its birth, there being in the best dispositions much averseness from good, and great proneness to evil; fortune doth not further its acquists, but casteth in rubs and hindrances thereto, every condition presenting its allurements or its affrightments from it; all things within us and about us conspire to render its production and its practice laborious.

It is ('tis true) a gift of Heaven, and cannot be obtained without a special influence of divine grace; but it is given as children are (of whom it is said, *Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward*⁴;) not without sore travail and labour of the mother, not without grievous difficulty and pangs in the birth. In our conversion to embrace virtue, God doth guide us; but to what? to sit still?

² Qui cupit optatam cursu contingere metam,
Multa tulit, fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit.

Hor. de Arte Poet.

³ Τῇ μὲν κακία ἥδονή, τῇ δὲ ἀρετῇ συγκεκλήρωται πόνος.—Chrys. in Joh. Or. 36.

Κακία μὲν γὰρ αὐτοδίδακτον· ἀρετὴ δὲ σὺν πόνῳ κτᾶται.—Syn. de Provid. 2.

⁴ Ps. cxxvii. 3.

No; to walk, to run in his ways: grace doth move us, but whereto? to do nothing? No; but to stir, and act vigorously: *The holy Spirit doth help our infirmities*⁵: but how could it help them, if we did not conjoin our best, though weak, endeavours with its operations? To what doth it *συναντιλαμβάνειν*, or *cohelp* us, but to *strive against sin, to work righteousness*, to perform duty with earnest intention of mind, and laborious activity? *God* (saith St. Chrysostom) *hath parted virtue with us, and neither hath left all to be in us, lest we should be elated to pride, nor himself hath taken all, lest we should decline to sloth*⁶.

Indeed the very nature and essence of virtue doth consist in the most difficult and painful efforts of soul; in the extirpating rooted prejudices and notions from our understanding; in bending a stiff will, and rectifying crooked inclinations; in overruling a rebellious temper; in curbing eager and importunate appetites; in taming wild passions; in withstanding violent temptations; in surmounting many difficulties, and sustaining many troubles: in struggling with various unruly lusts within, and encountering many stout enemies abroad, which assault our reason, and *war against our soul*: in such exercises its very being lieth; its birth, its growth, its subsistence dependeth on them; so that from any discontinuance or remission of them it would soon decay, languish away, and perish.

What attention, what circumspection, and vigilancy of mind, what intention of spirit, what force of resolution, what command and care over ourselves doth it require, to keep our hearts from vain thoughts and evil

⁵ Rom. viii. 26.—*συναντιλαμβάνεται*. Heb. xii. 4; Rom. ii. 10; Acts x. 35.

⁶ Ἐμερίσατο πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὴν ἀρετὴν ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ οὔτε ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἀφῆκε τὸ πᾶν εἶναι, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ἀπόνοιαν ἐπαίρωμεθα, οὔτε αὐτὸς τὸ πᾶν ἔλαβεν, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ῥαθυμίαν ἀποκλίνωμεν· ἀλλ' &c.—Chrys. *tom.* 5; *Or.* 28.

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ περὶ τὰ καλὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐγχείρησις δίχα τῆς ἀνωθεν βοήθειας τελειωθήσεται· οὐδὲ ἡ ἀνωθεν χάρις ἐπὶ τὸν μὴ σπουδάζοντα παραγένοιτ' ἂν, ἀλλ' ἑκάτερα συγκεκριᾶσθαι προσήκει, σπουδὴν τε ἀνθρωπίνην, καὶ τὴν διὰ πίστεως ἀνωθεν καθήκουσαν συμμαχίαν εἰς τελείωσιν ἀρετῆς.—*Bas. Const. Mon. cap.* 15.

desires; to guard our tongue from wanton, unjust, uncharitable discourse; to order our steps uprightly and steadily in all the paths of duty? *Καὶ τί οὐκ ἐπιπόνον τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς;* and *what* (as St. Chrysostom asketh) *of all things belonging to virtue is not laborious?*⁷ It is no small task to know it, wherein it consisteth, and what it demandeth of us; it is a far more painful thing to conform our practice unto its rules and dictates.

If travelling in a rough way⁸; if climbing up a steep hill; if combating stern foes, and fighting sharp battles; if crossing the grain of our nature and desires; if continually holding a strict rein over all our parts and powers, be things of labour and trouble, then greatly such is the practice of virtue.

Indeed each virtue hath its peculiar difficulty, needing much labour to master it: *Faith* is called *ἔργον πίστεως*, *the work of faith*⁹; and it is no such easy work as may be imagined, to bring our hearts unto a thorough persuasion about truths crossing our sensual conceits, and controlling our peevish humours; unto a perfect submission of our understanding, and resignation of our will to whatever God teacheth or prescribeth; to a firm resolution of adhering to that profession, which exacteth of us so much pains, and exposeth us to so many troubles.

Charity is also a laborious exercise of many good works; and he that will practise it must in divers ways labour hardly: he must labour in voiding from his soul many dispositions deeply radicated therein by nature, opinion, and custom; envy, frowardness, stubbornness, perverse, and vain selfishness; from whence wrath, revenge, spite, and malice do spring forth. He must labour in effectual performance of all good offices, and in catching all occasions of doing good¹; he must

⁷ Chrys. in Joh. Or. 36.

⁸ *Τῆς ἀρετῆς ἰδρωτὰ θεοὶ προπάρουθεν ἔθηκαν
Ἀθάνατοι, μακρὸς τε καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτήν,
Καὶ τρηχύς.*— Hes. "Εργ. α'.

⁹ 1 Thess. i. 3; 2 Thess. i. 11; John vi. 29.

¹ Gal. vi. 10.

exert that κόπον ἀγάπης that *labour of love*, whereof St. Paul doth speak²; he must (as that holy apostle directeth, not only in precept, but by his own practice) work with his own hands, that he may supply the wants of his neighbour.

Hope itself (which one would think, when grounded well, should be a no less easy than pleasant duty) doth need much labour to preserve it safe, strait, and stable, among the many waves and billows of temptation assaying to shake and subvert it; whence a *patience of hope* is recommended to us³; and we so often are exhorted to hold it fast, to keep it sure, firm, and unshaken to the end.

Temperance also surely demandeth no small pains⁴; it being no slight business to check our greedy appetites, to shun the enticements of pleasure, to escape the snares of company and example, to support the ill will and reproaches of those zealots and bigots for vice, who cannot tolerate any nonconformity to their extravagances; but, as St. Peter doth express it, *think it strange if others do not run with them to the same excess of riot, speaking ill of them for it*⁵.

What should I speak of meekness, of patience, of humility, of contentedness? Is it not manifest how laborious those virtues are, and what pains are necessary in the obtaining, in the exercise of them? what pains, I say, they require in the voidance of fond conceits, in the suppression of froward humours, in the quelling fierce passions, in the brooking grievous crosses and adversities, in the bearing heinous injuries and affronts?

Thus doth all virtue require much industry; and it therefore necessarily must itself be a great virtue, which is the mother, the nurse, the guardian of all virtues;

² 1 Thess. i. 3; Heb. vi. 10; Eph. iv. 28; Acts xx. 35.

³ Ἀκλιῇ.—Heb. x. 23; vi. 19; 1 Thess. i. 3; Heb. x. 36; vi. 11. Ἐνδείκνυσθαι σπουδὴν.—Heb. iii. 6. 14; 2 Pet. i. 10.

⁴ Πάντες ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος ὑμνοῦσιν, ὡς καλὸν μὲν ἢ σωφροσύνη τε καὶ δικαιοσύνη, χαλεπὸν μὲν τοι καὶ ἐπίπονον.—Plat. *de Rep.* 2.

⁵ 1 Pet. iv. 4.

yea, which indeed is an ingredient and constitutive part of every virtue; for if virtue were easily attainable or practicable without a good measure of pains, how could it be virtue? what excellency could it have, what praise could it claim, what reward could it expect? God hath indeed made the best things not easily attainable, hath set them high out of our reach, to exercise our industry in getting them, that we might raise up ourselves to them, that being obtained, they may the more deserve our esteem and his reward.

Lastly, The sovereign good, the last scope of our actions, the top and sum of our desires, Happiness itself, or eternal life in perfect rest, joy, and glory; although it be the supreme gift of God, and special boon of divine grace (τὸ δὲ χάρισμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, *But, saith St. Paul, the gift of God's grace is eternal life*⁶); yet it also by God himself is declared to be the result and reward of industry; for we are commanded *to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and to give diligence in making our calling and election sure*, by virtuous practice; and God (saith St. Paul) *will render to every man according to his works; to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life*⁷; and in the close of God's book it is proclaimed, as a truth of greatest moment, and special point of God's will, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life*. It is plainly industry, which climbeth the holy mount; it is industry, which taketh *the kingdom of heaven by force*; it is industry, which *so runneth as to obtain the prize, which so fighteth as to receive the crown, which so watcheth as to secure our everlasting interest to us*⁸.

Thus do the choicest good things, of which we are capable, spring from industry, or depend upon it; and no considerable good can be attained without it: thus

⁶ Rom. vi. 23; Eph. ii. 8.

⁷ Phil. ii. 12; 2 Pet. i. 10; Rom. ii. 6, 7, 10; vi. 22.

⁸ Rev. xxii. 14; Heb. xii. 22; Matt. xi. 12; 1 Cor. ix. 24; James i. 12; Matt. xxiv. 42; xxv. 13; Luke xii. 37; Rev. iii. 3.

all the gifts of God are by it conveyed to us, or are rendered in effect beneficial to us; for the gifts of nature are but capacities, which it improveth; the gifts of fortune or Providence are but instruments, which it employeth to our use; the gifts of grace are the supports and succours of it; and the very gift of glory is its fruit and recompence.

There are further several other material considerations and weighty motives to the practice of this duty, which meditation hath suggested to me: but these, in regard to your patience, must suffice at present; the other (together with an application proper to our condition and calling) being reserved to another occasion.

SERMON XVIII.

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR GENERAL CALLING AS CHRISTIANS.

ROM. xii. 11.

“Not slothful in business ¹.”

INDUSTRY is a very eminent virtue, being an ingredient, or the parent, of all other virtues, of constant use upon all occasions, and having influence upon all our affairs.

For it is in our nature framed; all our powers of soul and body being fitted for it, tending to it, requiring it for their preservation and perfection.

We were designed for it in our first happy state; and upon our lapse thence were further doomed to it, as the sole remedy of our needs and the inconveniences to which we became exposed. For

Without it we cannot well sustain or secure our life in the enjoyment of any comfort or convenience; we must work to earn our food, our clothing, our shelter; and to supply every indigency of accommodations, which our nature doth crave.

To it God hath annexed the best and most desirable rewards: success to our undertakings, wealth, honour, wisdom, virtue, salvation; all which as they flow from God's bounty, and depend on his blessing; so from them they are usually conveyed to us through our industry, as the ordinary channel and instrument of attaining them.

¹ Τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί. Solitudine non pigri.—Vulg.

It is requisite to us, even for procuring ease, and preventing a necessity of immoderate labour.

It is in itself sweet and satisfactory; as freeing our mind from distraction, and wrecking irresolution; as feeding us with good hope, and yielding a foretaste of its good fruits.

It furnisheth us with courage to attempt, and resolution to achieve things needful, worthy of us, and profitable to us.

It is attended with a good conscience, and cheerful reflections, of having well spent our time, and employed our talents to good advantage.

It sweeteneth our enjoyments, and seasoneth our attainments with a delightful relish.

It is the guard of innocence, and barreth out temptations to vice, to wantonness, to vain curiosity, and pragmatism.

It argueth an ingenuous and generous disposition of soul; aspiring to worthy things, and pursuing them in the fairest way; disdaining to enjoy the common benefits, or the fruits of other men's labour, without deserving them from the world, and requiting it for them.

It is necessary for every condition and station, for every calling, for every relation; no man without it being able to deport himself well in any state, to manage any business, to discharge any sort of duty.

To it the world is indebted for all the culture which advanceth it above rude and sordid barbarism; for whatever in common life is stately, or comely, or useful, industry hath contrived it, industry hath composed and framed it.

It is recommended to us by all sorts of patterns considerable; for all nature is continually busy and active in tendency toward its proper designs; heaven and earth do work in incessant motion; every living creature is employed in propping for its sustenance; the blessed spirits are always on the wing in despatching the commands of God, and ministering succour to us: God himself is ever watchful, and ever busy in preserv-

ing the world, and providing for the needs of every creature.

The lives of our blessed Saviour, of all the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the saints, in this respect have been more exemplary; no virtue being more conspicuous in their practice, than industry in performing the hard duties and painful tasks imposed on them for the service of God, and the benefit of mankind.

Such is the virtue upon which I have formerly discoursed in general and at large, but shall now more specially consider, according to St. Paul's prescription, in reference to its most proper matter, *business*, explaining and pressing it accordingly.

Be not *slothful in business* (that is, in discharge of it), or, *to business* (that is, to undertake it): this is the rule; the nature and needfulness whereof we shall declare.

By *σπουδή*, *business*, we may understand any object of our care and endeavours which doth require them, and may deserve them; which by reason of its difficulty cannot well be accomplished or attained without them; and which is productive of some fruit or recompense answerable to them; the which hath *operæ causam*, a need of labour, and *operæ pretium*, some effect worth our pains: if it be not such, it is not a due matter of virtuous and laudable industry.

There are many things, about which men with great earnestness employ themselves, called business, but not deserving that name: there are divers spurious kinds of industry, which may not pretend to commendation, but rather do merit blame; according to that of St. Chrysostom, *Labour which hath no profit cannot obtain any praise*².

There is a *κενοσπουδία*, a vain industry, and a *κακοσπουδία*, a naughty industry, both agreeing with genuine virtuous industry in the act, as implying careful and painful activity, but discording from it in object and design, and consequently in worth and moral esteem.

² Πόνος οὐδὲν κέρδος ἔχων, ἐγκωμίου παντὸς ἀπεστέρηται.—Chrysost. tom. v. Orat. 64.

*workers of iniquity*⁷, οἱ πονηροὶ, *painful men*⁸, οἱ πανούργοι, men that will do all things; who will spare no pains, nor leave any stone unturned, for satisfying their lusts, and accomplishing their bad designs.

So indeed it is, that as no great good, so neither can any great mischief be effected without much pains; and if we consider either the characters or the practices of those who have been famous mischief-doers, the pests of mankind and disturbers of the world, we shall find them to have been no sluggards⁹.

These two sorts of vain and bad industry the prophet Isaiah seemeth to describe in those words: *They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web*¹; of which expressions one may denote mischievous, the other frivolous diligence in contrivance or execution of naughty or vain designs; and to them both that of the prophet Hosea may be referred: *They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind*; guilt, remorse, and punishment being the consequences of both². And of them both common experience doth afford very frequent and obvious instances, a great part of human life being taken up with them. For

How assiduously intent and eager may we observe men to be at sports! how soon will they rise to go forth to them! with what constancy and patience will they toil in them all the day! How indefatigable are they in riding and running about after a dog or a hawk, to catch a poor beast or silly bird!

How long will men sit poring on their games, dispensing with their food and sleep for it³!

How long and serious attention will men yield to a wanton play! how many hours will they contentedly sit thereat! What study will men employ on jests and impertinent wit! How earnest will they be to satisfy their vain curiosity!

⁷ Ἐργάζεται τῆς ἀδικίας. Luke xiii. 27.

⁸ Ps. vi. 8.

⁹ Catiline, Marius, Stilico, Cæsar, &c.

¹ Isa. lix. 5.

² Hos. viii. 7; Eccclus. xxxiv. 2; Prov. xxii. 8; Hos. x. 13.

³ Συνείρουσι γὰρ οἱ φιλόκυβοι νύκτας ἡμέραις ἄσιτοι καὶ ἄποτοι, καὶ ἡδονῆς ἡδονὴν περιέσσι.—Lib. Orat. 31.

Aliud agere, to be impertinently busy, doing that which conduceth to no good purpose, is in some respect worse than to do nothing, or to forbear all action; for it is a positive abuse of our faculties, and trifling with God's gifts³; it is a throwing away labour and care, things valuable in themselves; it is often a running out of the way, which is worse than standing still; it is a debasing our reason, and declining from our manhood, nothing being more foolish or childish than to be solicitous and serious about trifles: for who are more busy and active than children? who are fuller of thoughts and designs, or more eager in prosecution of them, than they? But all is about ridiculous toys, the shadows of business, suggested to them by apish curiosity and imitation. Of such industry we may understand that of the Preacher, *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them*⁴; for that a man soon will be weary of that labour, which yieldeth no profit or beneficial return.

But there is another industry worse than that, when men are very busy in devising and compassing mischiefs; an industry whereof the devil affordeth a great instance⁵; for the cursed fiend is very diligent, ever watching for occasions to supplant us, ever plotting methods and means to do harm, ever driving on his mischievous designs with unwearied activity; *going to and fro in the earth; running about as a roaring lion*, looking for prey, and *seeking whom he may devour*⁶.

And his wicked brood are commonly like him, *being*

³ "Ἄλλω γὰρ οὐδενὶ φιλοπόνου τὸν κενόσπουδον ὀρίζομεν ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις ὄντα πολλάκις, ἢ τῷ τὸν μὲν εἰς ἀνωφελῆ πονεῖν καὶ ἀδιαφόρως, τὸν δὲ ἕνεκά του τῶν συμφερόντων καὶ λυσιτελῶν.—Plut. *de Commun. Not.* p. 1949. edit. Steph.

Σπουδάζειν καὶ πονεῖν παιδιᾶς χάριν ἡλίθιον φαίνεται καὶ λίαν παιδικόν.—Arist. *Eth.* x. 6.

Ἡ ἐπὶ μικροῖς σπουδῇ μέμψιν φέρει.—Plut. *ibid.*

Vide de Glor. Ath. p. 621.

Οἱ σπουδάζοντες ἐν τοῖς γέλοιοις, ἐν τοῖς σπουδαίοις ἔσονται καταγέλαστοι.—Cat. Maj. apud Plut. *in Aporrh.*

⁴ Eccles. x. 15.

⁵ Luke xxii. 31; 2 Cor. ii. 11.

⁶ Job i. 7; 1 Pet. v. 8.

*workers of iniquity*¹, οἱ πονηροὶ, *painful men*², οἱ πανούργοι, men that will do all things; who will spare no pains, nor leave any stone unturned, for satisfying their lusts, and accomplishing their bad designs.

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¹ Isa. lix. 5.

² Hos. viii. 7; Eccclus. xxxiv. 2; Prov. xxii. 8; Hos. x. 13.

³ Συνείρουνσι γὰρ οἱ φιλόκυβοι νύκτας ἡμέραις ἀσιτοὶ καὶ ἀποτοὶ, καὶ ἡδονῆς ἡδονὴν περιέσσι.—Lib. Orat. 31.

How in such cases do men forget what they are doing, that sport should be sport ⁴, not work ; to divert and relax us, not to employ and busy us ; to take off our minds a little, not wholly to take them up ; not to exhaust or tire our spirits, but to refresh and cheer them, that they may become more fit for grave and serious occupations !

How painful will others be *in hewing them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no water* ⁵ ; that is, in immoderate pursuit of worldly designs ! How studiously will they plod, how restlessly will they trudge, what carking and drudgery will they endure in driving on projects of ambition and avarice ! What will not they gladly do or suffer to get a little preferment, or a little profit ! It was a common practice of old, and sure the world is not greatly mended since the Psalmist did thus reflect, *Surely every man walketh in a vain show ; surely they are disquieted in vain : he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them* ⁶.

How many vigilant and stout pursuers are there of sensuality and riotous excess ! such as those of whom the prophet speaketh, *Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink ; that continue until night, till wine inflame them* ⁷.

How busy (O shame ! O misery ! how fiercely busy) are some in accomplishing designs of malice and revenge ! How intent are some to over-reach, to circumvent, to supplant their neighbour ! How sore pains will some take to seduce, corrupt, or debauch others ! How active will some be in sowing strifes, in raising factions, in fomenting disorders in the world ! How many industrious slaves hath the devil ⁸, who will spare no pains about any kind of work which he putteth them to ! How many like *those* of whom the Wise Man saith, *Their feet run to evil, and are swift in running to mischief* :

⁴ Τῷ γὰρ ὄντι παίζοντα δεῖ παίζειν.—Plut.

⁵ Jer. ii. 13.

⁶ Ps. xxxix. 6.

⁷ Isa. v. 11.

⁸ Ἐννοήσωμέν τινα ὁ διάβολος ἐπέταξε, πῶς ἐπίπονα, πῶς ἐπίμοχθα, &c.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. 16.

*they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall*⁹!

Now with all these labourers we may well expostulate in the words of the prophet: *Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not*¹?

Such labours are unworthy of men, much less do they beseeem Christians.

It becometh us not as rational creatures to employ the excellent gifts of our nature, and noble faculties of our high-born soul, the forces of our mind, the advantages of our fortune, our precious time, our very care and labour, vainly or unprofitably upon any thing base or mean: being that our reason is capable of achieving great and worthy things, we much debase it by stooping to regard toys; we do extremely abuse it by working mischief.

Much more doth it misbecome us as Christians (that is, persons devoted to so a high calling, who have so worthy employments assigned to us, so glorious hopes, so rich encouragements proposed to us for our work) to spend our thoughts and endeavours on things impertinent to our great design, or mainly thwarting it².

The proper matter and object of our industry (those false ones being excluded) is true business; or that which is incumbent on a man to do, either in way of duty, being required by God, or by dictate of reason, as conducing to some good purpose; so that in effect it will turn to account, and finally in advantageous return will pay him for his labour of mind or body; that which the Wise Man did intend when he advised, *Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might*³; whatever thy hand findeth, that is, whatever by divine appointment (by the command or providence of God), or which, upon rational deliberation, doth occur as matter of our action; comprising every good purpose and reasonable undertaking incident to us.

But, our business, according to the holy apostle's intent, may be supposed especially to be the work of our

⁹ Prov. i. 16; vi. 18; iv. 16.

² Eph. i. 18.

¹ Isa. lv. 2.

³ Eccles. ix. 10.

calling ; to which each man hath a peculiar obligation ; and which therefore is most properly his business, or ἡ σπουδὴ emphatically, the business allotted to him.

Now this business, our calling, is double : our general calling, which is common to us all as Christians ; and our particular calling, which peculiarly belongeth to us, as placed in a certain station, either in the Church or State. In both which vocations that we are much obliged and concerned to be industrious, shall be now my business to declare.

I. As to our general calling (that *sublime*, that *heavenly*, that *holy* vocation⁴), in which by divine grace, according to the evangelical dispensation, we are engaged, that necessarily requireth and most highly deserveth from us a great measure of industry ; the nature and design of it requireth, the fruit and result of it deserveth, our utmost diligence ; all sloth is inconsistent with discharging the duties, with enjoying the hopes, with obtaining the benefits thereof. For

It is a state of continual work, and is expressed in terms importing abundant, incessant, intense care and pain ; for to be indeed Christians, we must *work out our salvation with fear and trembling*⁵ ; we must *by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality*⁶. We must *walk worthy of the Lord, to all well pleasing, being fruitful in every good work*. We must *be rich in good works, and filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God*. We are *God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*⁷.

We have a soul to save, and are appointed εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας, *to make an acquist of salvation*⁸.

We have a mind to improve with virtue and wisdom, qualifying us for entrance into heaven, for enjoyment of God's favour, for conversation with angels.

⁴ Ἡ ἄνω κλησις, Phil. iii. 14.—Κλησις ἐπουράνιος, Heb. iii. 1.—⁵ Ἀγία κλησις, 2 Tim. i. 9 ; (Eph. i. 18 ; 2 Thess. i. 11.)

⁶ Phil. ii. 12.

⁷ Rom. ii. 7.

⁸ Col. i. 10 ; 1 Tim. vi. 18 ; Phil. i. 11 ; (John xv. 5. 8. 16 ; James iii. 17 ;) Eph. ii. 10.

⁹ 1 Thess. v. 9.

As Christians we are assumed to be servants of God, and re-admitted into his family, from which for our disloyalty we had been discarded²; so that as he was our natural Lord, so he is now such also by special grace; who did make us, who doth maintain us, under whose protection and at whose disposal we subsist; whence we are obliged to be faithfully diligent in his service: we must constantly wait upon him in devotional addresses; we must carefully study to know his pleasure; we must endeavour exactly to perform his will, and obey his commands¹; we must strive to advance his glory, to promote his interest, to improve all talents and advantages committed to us for those purposes; we must, as St. Paul expresseth it, *always abound in the work of the Lord*³.

We must also look upon ourselves as servants of Christ our Redeemer; who by his blood hath purchased us to himself, that we might be *zealous of good works*⁴; performing a service to him, which consisteth in a faithful discharge of manifold duties, and in pursuance of all virtue: with most intent application of mind, with expedite promptitude, with accurate circumspection; *giving all diligence* (as St. Peter speaketh) in *adding* one virtue to another⁵; *being ready* (as St. Paul saith) *to every good work*⁶; and *seeing that we walk circumspectly*⁶, or behave ourselves exactly according to the rules of duty in all our conversation.

This service requireth of us assiduous attendance on works of piety and devotion; that we do *incessantly watch to prayer*, that we *always give thanks*, that we *continually do offer up the sacrifice of praise to God*⁷.

It demandeth from us a continual labour of charity;

² 1 Thess. i. 9; Rom. vii. 6; vi. 22; Eph. ii. 19.

¹ Eph. v. 10; Rom. xii. 2; Luke xi. 28; Matt. xxv. 27.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 58.

⁴ Col. iii. 24; Eph. vi. 7; 1 Cor. vii. 23; vi. 20; Tit. ii. 14.

⁵ 2 Pet. i. 5,—*Σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες*.

⁶ Tit. iii. 1. ⁶ Eph. v. 15,—*Βλέπετε πῶς ἀκριβῶς*.

⁷ Col. iv. 2; Eph. vi. 18; Rom. xii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 17; Luke xviii. 1; 1 Thess. v. 18; Eph. v. 20; Col. iii. 17; Heb. xiii. 15.

that we *serve one another in love*; that we should, as *we have opportunity, work good to all men*; that we should *always pursue good toward one another, and toward all men* ⁸.

It obligeth us *with all our powers to pursue peace with all men* (which, considering our natural peevishness, pride, and perverseness, is often no easy task), and that we do *σπουδάζειν, studiously endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* ⁹.

It chargeth on us contentedly and patiently to undergo whatever God doth impose of burden or sufferance, so that *patience have its perfect work* ¹; and it is a crabbed work to bend our stiff inclinations, to quell our refractory passions, to make our sturdy humour buckle thereto.

It doth exact that we should govern and regulate according to very strict and severe laws all the faculties of our soul, all the members of our body, all internal motions, and all external actions proceeding from us; that we should check our inclinations, curb our appetites, and compose our passions; that we should guard our hearts from vain thoughts and bad desires; that we should bridle our tongues from evil and from idle discourses; that we should order our steps in the straight way of righteousness, not deflecting to the right hand or to the left.

In the discharge of this service, how many rough difficulties are there to be surmounted, how many great obstacles to be removed, how many stout oppositions to be encountered, how many potent enemies to be vanquished, how many sore hardships, crosses, and tribulations to be endured!

How shrewd a task must we find it to circumscribe our hearts, to mortify our earthly members, to crucify our flesh with its affections and lusts, to pull out our right eyes, and cut off our right hands, to renounce our

⁸ 1 Thess. i. 3, *Κόπος τῆς ἀγάπης*—Gal. v. 13, *Δουλεύοντες*—Gal. vi. 10, *Ἐργαζόμεθα*—1 Thess. v. 15.

⁹ Rom. xii. 18, *Εἰ δυνατόν*—Heb. xii. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 22; Eph. iv. 3.

¹ James i. 4.

worldly interests, to hate our nearest relations, to take up and bear our cross, whenever conscience and duty shall call us thereto !

Our calling, therefore, doth require great industry ; and the business of it consequently is well represented by those performances which demand the greatest intention and laborious activity : it is styled *exercise* (agonistic and ascetic exercise ; γύμναζε σεαυτὸν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν, *Exercise thyself to godliness* ; and ἐν τούτῳ δὲ αὐτὸς ἀσκῶ, *Herein I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men*) ; *wrestling* (ἡμῶν ἡ πάλη, *our wrestling is not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers*) ; *running a race* (Let us run with patience the race that is set before us : So run that ye may obtain : I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling) ; a *warfare*, a *combating* (War a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience² : Fight the good fight : Thou therefore endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ : Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things) ; offering *violence* (The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force) ; *watching* (Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober : Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong : Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation³).

Hence the precepts importing the general tenor of Christian practice are usually couched in terms implying great sedulity and contention of soul : Ἀγωνίζεσθε, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate : Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest : Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life : Give diligence to make your calling and election sure : Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober,*

² 1 Tim. iv. 7 ; Acts xxiv. 16 ; Heb. xii. 11 ; Eph. vi. 12 ; Heb. xii. 1 ; 1 Cor. ix. 24 ; Phil. iii. 14 ; 2 Tim. iv. 7 ; 1 Tim. i. 18, 19.

³ 1 Tim. vi. 12 ; 2 Tim. ii. 3 ; 1 Cor. ix. 25 ; Matt. xi. 12 ; 1 Thess. v. 6 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 13 ; Matt. xxvi. 41 ; xxiv. 42 ; Luke xii. 37 ; 1 Pet. v. 8 ; Rev. iii. 2 ; xvi. 15.

*and hope to the end: Wherefore, brethren, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless*⁴.

Such is the work of our general calling, and so much industry it challengeth from us; with great reason indeed, for that such work is needful to our happiness, and that our labour will certainly be rewarded therewith.

The work indeed of itself is most worthy to employ us, doth most become us, doth much adorn us, doth best befit our divine extraction and large capacity; is the noblest, the handsomest, the sweetest employment that could take us up: but we have also the greatest inducements and encouragements possible for our industry therein⁵.

There are, by the divine bounty and mercy, wages assigned abundantly correspondent to our work, yea, infinitely surpassing it; there is *πολὺς μισθός*, a *great* (or a manifold) *hire*⁶ for our slender and simple performances; there are several noble prizes highly worth our striving for with our utmost strength and contention of soul.

In recompense thereof we shall assuredly gain, even here in this transitory state the special favour and love of God, with his constant protection and care for our good⁷; his faithful direction and friendly assistance to guide us and uphold us in all our ways, to bless and prosper our undertakings, to supply us in our needs, and comfort us in our distresses; so that we shall *lack nothing* that is good, that *no evil shall happen to us*, that *all things* shall concur and *co-operate for our benefit*⁸.

We shall thereby taste the satisfactions of a calm

⁴ Luke xiii. 24; *Σπουδάζωμεν*, Heb. iv. 11; *Ἐργάζεσθε*, John vi. 27; *Σπουδάζατε*, 2 Pet. i. 10; 1 Pet. i. 13; Luke xii. 35; Eph. vi. 14; 2 Pet. iii. 14.

⁵ John iv. 36.

⁶ Matt. v. 12.

⁷ Rom. xiv. 18.—“He that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.”

⁸ Ps. xxxiv. 9; lxxxiv. 11; xxxiii. 19; xxxvii. 3. 19; xci. 10; Prov. xii. 21; Rom. viii. 38.

mind and a sound conscience, quickened by the consolations of the divine Spirit; *the peace of God ruling in our hearts, which passeth all understanding*⁹.

We shall afterward, when this moment is passed over, and our short day's work despatched, receive from God's bountiful hand an unconceivable affluence of good things, an eternal permanence of life; undisturbed rest, *indefectible wealth*, ineffable joy, incorruptible glory, *a kingdom unshakable*¹.

He (saith our Lord) *that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting*².

To them (saith St. Paul) *who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, God in recompense will bestow eternal life*³. And,

I have (saith that blessed labourer of himself) *fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness*⁴.

What more effectual spur or incentive can there be to industry in this business, than to consider that which St. Paul so often doth inculcate: *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same* (a recompense for the same) *he shall receive of the Lord*; and, *knowing that* (in consideration of our service done to the Lord) *of the Lord we shall receive the reward of the inheritance*⁵?

What exhortation can be more firmly grounded, or strongly backed, than is that of the apostle: *Therefore, my brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*⁶?

May it not also much encourage us to industry, to be assured, that not only the kind of our work, but the degree of our labour, shall be considered and requited

⁹ Col. iii. 15; Phil. iv. 7.

¹ James i. 12; 1 Pet. v. 4; 1 Cor. ix. 25.

² John iv. 36.

³ Ἀποδώσει,—Rom. ii. 6, 7.

⁴ 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

⁵ Eph. vi. 8; 2 Cor. v. 10; Col. iii. 24.

⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 58.

in just proportion; so that the harder we work, the higher we shall be rewarded; for *to each one*⁷ (saith our Lord) *the Son of man shall render a reward*, κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ, *according to his performance*. Every one (saith St. Paul) *shall receive ἴδιον μισθὸν κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον κόπον*, *his proper reward according to his proper work*; whence we have reason to observe St. John's advice, *Look to yourselves, that ye lose not those things which ye have gained, but that ye receive a full reward*⁸.

To be negligent or slothful in such a case, for want of a little care and pains to forfeit such advantages, what a pity, what a folly is it! Were an opportunity presented, by a little minding our business, and bestirring ourselves, to procure a fair estate, or a good preferment, would not he be deemed mad or sottish, who should sit still, and forego that his advantage? How much more wildness is it to be drowsy and sluggish in this case, thereby losing eternal bliss and glory! Well therefore might the apostle say, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation*⁹? How shall we escape not only the sin and guilt of basest ingratitude toward him that graciously doth offer it, but the imputation of most wretched folly, in being so much wanting to our own interest and welfare?

Is it not a sad thing, a woful shame, to observe what pains men will throw away upon things of small or no concernment to them? yea, what toil and drudgery they will sustain in the service of Satan, in pursuit of sin, in the gratification of their vanities and lusts?

What pains will a covetous wretch take in scraping for pelf! how will he rack his mind with carking solicitude to get, to keep, to spare it! How will he tire his spirits with restless travail! how will he pinch his carcass for want of what nature craveth! What infamy and obloquy will he endure for his niggardly parsimony and sordidness!

⁷ Ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ, — Matt. xvi. 27.

⁸ 1 Cor. iii. 8; Rev. xxii. 12; ii. 23; Matt. xxv. 21; Luke xix. 12; Μισθὸν πλήρη ἀπολάβητε, — 2 John 8.

⁹ Heb. ii. 3.

How much labour will an ambitious fop undergo for preferment, or vain honour! To how many tedious attendances, to how pitiful servilities will he submit! what sore crosses and disappointments will he swallow! what affronts and indignities will he patiently digest, without desisting from his enterprise!

How will a man, as St. Paul observed, πάντα ἐγκρατεύεσθαι, endure all painful abstinence and continence, in order to the obtaining a *corruptible crown*¹, a fading garland of bays, a puff of vain applause!

What diligence will men use to compass the enjoyment of forbidden pleasures! how watchful in catching opportunities, how eager in quest of them will they be! What difficulties will they undertake, what hazards will they incur, what damages and inconveniences will they sustain, rather than fail of satisfying their desires!

What achings of head and heart, what pangs of mind, and gripes of conscience, what anxieties of regret and fear, will every worker of iniquity undergo! So faithful friends hath this vain and evil world; so diligent servants hath the accursed lord thereof; so careful and laborious will men be to destroy and damn themselves. O that we could be willing to spend as much care and pains in the service of our God! O that we were as true friends of ourselves²! O that we could be as industrious for our salvation! that is, in the business of our general calling: which having considered, let us proceed to the other business belonging to us, which is,

II. The business of our particular calling; that in reference whereto St. Paul doth prescribe, *Every man, as the Lord hath called him, so let him walk. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called*³: let him so abide, as faithfully to prosecute the work, and discharge the duty of it; the doing which other-where he termeth πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, *to do our own business (working with our hands)*, and enjoineth it in opposition to those two great pests of life, sloth and

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 25.

² Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιθ'.

³ 1 Cor. vii. 17. 20.

pragmatical curiosity⁴; or the neglect of our own, and meddling with other men's affairs.

This the apostle nameth *our calling*, because we are called or appointed thereto by divine Providence; for he supposeth and taketh it for granted, that to each man in this world God hath assigned a certain station, unto which peculiar action is suited; in which station he biddeth him quietly to abide, till Providence fairly doth translate him, and during his abode therein diligently to execute the work thereof⁵.

Every man is a member of a double body; of the civil Commonwealth, and of the Christian Church: in relation to the latter whereof, St. Paul telleth us (and what he saith by parity of reason may be referred likewise to the former), that *God hath set the members of every one in the body, as it pleaseth him*⁶; and as it is in the natural, so it is in every political and spiritual body, every member hath its proper use and function: *All members* (saith St. Paul) *have not τὴν αὐτὴν πρᾶξιν, the same office*⁷, or the same work and operation; yet every one hath some work. There is no member designed to be idle or useless, conferring no benefit to the whole; but *the whole body* (saith the apostle) *fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying itself in love*⁸: each member doth conspire and co-operate to the strength, nourishment, thriving, and welfare of the whole.

Every man (who continueth a man in his senses, or in any good degree of natural integrity) is by God endowed with competent abilities to discharge some function useful to common good, or at least needful to his own sustenance⁹; to every one some talent is committed, which in subordination to God's service he may improve to the benefit of the World, God's temporal, or of the Church, God's spiritual kingdom.

⁴ 1 Thess. iv. 11; Eph. iv. 28.

⁶ 1 Cor. xii. 18.

⁷ Rom. xii. 4.

⁵ 1 Cor. vii. 22.

⁸ Eph. iv. 16.

⁹ Ἐκαστῷ ὡς ἐμέρισεν Θεός, — 1 Cor. vii. 17.

It is plainly necessary, that the greatest part of men should have a determinate work allotted to them, that they may support their life and get their food, without being injurious, offensive, or burdensome to others; for their living they must either follow some trade, or they must shark and filch, or they must beg, or they must starve.

And the rest are obliged to do somewhat conducive to public good, that they may deserve to live; for a drone should not be among the bees, nor hath right to devour the honey. If any man doth pretend, or presume, that he hath nothing to do but to eat, to sleep, to play, to laugh, to enjoy his ease, his pleasure, his humour, he thereby doth as it were disclaim a reasonable title of living among men, and sharing in the fruits of their industry; he, in St. Paul's judgment, should be debarred of food, for *this* (saith the holy apostle) *we commanded you, that if any man would not work, neither should he eat*¹.

Such an one in the body of men, what is he but an unnatural excrescence, sucking nutriment from it, without yielding ornament or use? What is he but a wen, deforming and encumbering the body; or a canker, infesting and corrupting it?

As no man (at least with decency, convenience, and comfort) can live in the world without being obliged to divers other men for their help in providing accommodations for him; so justice and ingenuity, corroborated by divine sanctions, do require of him, that in commutation he, one way or other, should undertake some pains redounding to the benefit of others.

So hath the Great Author of order distributed the ranks and offices of men in order to mutual benefit and comfort; that one man should plough, another thresh, another grind, another labour at the forge, another knit or weave, another sail, another trade, another supervise all these, labouring to keep them all in order and peace; that one should work with his hands and

¹ 2 Thess. iii. 10.

feet, another with his head and tongue; all conspiring to one common end, the welfare of the whole, and the supply of what is useful to each particular member; every man so reciprocally obliging and being obliged; the prince being obliged to the husbandman for his bread, to the weaver for his clothes, to the mason for his palace, to the smith for his sword; those being all obliged to him for his vigilant care in protecting them, for their security in pursuing the work, and enjoying the fruit of their industry.

So every man hath a calling and proper business; whereto that industry is required, I need not much to prove, the thing itself in reason and experience being so clearly evident: for what business can be well despatched, what success can be expected to any undertaking, in what calling can any man thrive, without industry? What business is there that will go on of itself, or proceed to any good issue, if we do not carefully look to it, steadily hold it in its course, constantly push and drive it forward? It is true, as in nature, so in all affairs, *Nihil movet non motum*, nothing moveth without being moved.

Our own interest should move us to be industrious in our calling, that we may obtain the good effects of being so in a comfortable and creditable subsistence; that we may not suffer the damages and wants, the disappointments and disgraces ensuing on sloth: but the chief motive should be from piety and conscience; for that it is a duty which we owe to God. For God having placed us in our station, he having apportioned to us our task, we being in transaction of our business his servants, we do owe to him that necessary property of good servants, without which fidelity cannot subsist²; for how can he be looked on as a faithful servant, who doth not effectually perform the work charged on him, or diligently execute the orders of his master?

St. Paul doth enjoin servants, that they should *in all things obey their masters*³, with conscientious regard to

² 1 Cor. iv. 2.

³ Col. iii. 22; Eph. vi. 5; 1 Cor. vii. 22, 23.

God, as therein performing service to God, and expecting recompence from him : and of princes he saith, that they, in dispensation of justice, enacting laws, imposing taxes, and all political administrations, are *the ministers of God*, προσκαρτεροῦντες, *attending constantly upon this very thing*⁴ : and if these extremes, the highest and lowest of all vocations, are services of God ; if the highest upon that score be tied to so much diligence, then surely all middle places, upon the same account of conscience toward God, do exact no less.

If he that hath one talent, and he that hath ten, must both improve them for God's interest ; then he that hath two, or three, or more, is obliged to the same duty proportionably.

Every one should consider the world as the family of that great Paterfamilias, *of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*⁵, and himself as an officer or servant therein, by God's will and designation constituted in that employment into which Providence hath cast him, to confer in his order and way somewhat toward a provision for the maintenance of himself and of his fellow-servants. Of a superior officer our Lord saith, *Who is that faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them their meat in due season*⁶ ? So the greatest men are as stewards, treasurers, comptrollers, or purveyors ; the rest are inferior servants, in their proper rank and capacity.

And he that with diligence performeth his respective duty (be it high and honourable, or mean and contemptible in outward appearance) will please God, as keeping good order, and as being useful to his service ; so that, upon the reckoning, God will say unto him, *Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things ; I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*⁷. But he that doeth otherwise (behaving himself carelessly or

⁴ Rom. xiii. 6.

⁵ Eph. iii. 15.

⁶ Matt. xxiv. 45 ; Luke xii. 42.

⁷ 1 Cor. xiv. 33 ; Matt. xxv. 21.

sluggishly in his business) will offend God, as committing disorder, and as being unprofitable. He committeth disorder, according to that of St. Paul: *We hear there are some which walk among you disorderly, not working at all*⁸. His sentence and doom will be, according to our Lord, *O thou wicked and slothful servant—Cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness*⁹; which words are spoken in relation to one, who being a flatterer or sluggard in his calling did not improve the special talent intrusted with him for God's service.

In fine, if we are conscientiously industrious in our vocation, we shall assuredly find the blessing of God thereon; and that he thereby will convey good success, comfort, competent wealth, a fair reputation, all desirable good unto us; for as all these things are promised to industry, so the promise especially doth belong to that industry, which a man doth exercise in an orderly course of action in his own way; or rather in God's way, wherein Divine Providence hath set him.

An irregular or impertinent laboriousness, out of a man's calling or sphere; a being diligent in other men's affairs, invading their office (as if I a priest will be trading, a layman preaching), may not claim the benefit of those promises, or the blessings of industry: but a husbandman, who, with conscientious regard to God, and confidence in him, is painful in tilling his ground, may expect a good crop¹; a merchant, who (upon the same principle, with the like disposition) earnestly followeth his trade, may hope for safe voyages and good markets; a prince carefully minding his affairs may look for peace and prosperity to his country; a scholar studying hard may be well assured of getting knowledge, and finding truth; all, who with honest diligence constantly do pursue their business, may confidently and cheerfully hope to reap the advantages suitable to it from the favourable blessing of God. So that we

⁸ 2 Thess. iii. 11.

⁹ Matt. xxv. 26. 30.

¹ Prov. x. 4; xiii. 11.

have all reason to observe the Apostle's precept, *Not to be slothful in business.*

I should apply this doctrine to our own case, urging its practice by considerations peculiar to our vocation: but having already passed the bounds of time, I reserve the doing it to another opportunity.

*Now the God of peace sanctify you wholly, and make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight*², through our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom for ever be all glory and praise. Amen.

² 1 Thess. v. 23 ; Heb. xiii. 21.

THE END.

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